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Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

A guide



The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working:

- to conserve and enhance England's countryside;
- to spread social and economic opportunity for the people who live there;
- to help everyone, wherever they live and whatever their background, to enjoy the countryside and share in this priceless national asset.

The Countryside Agency will work to achieve the very best for the English countryside – its people and places, by:

- influencing those whose decisions affect the countryside through our expertise, our research and by spreading good practice by showing what works;
- implementing specific work programmes reflecting priorities set by Parliament, the Government and the Agency Board.

To find out more about our work, and for information about the countryside, visit our website: www.countryside.gov.uk

The Countryside Agency publications catalogue (CA2) includes a full listing of all our publications. Contact Countryside Agency Publications for a free copy.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

A guide

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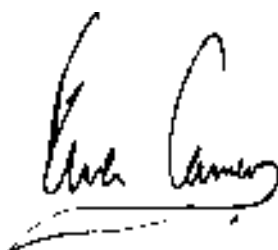
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Foreword

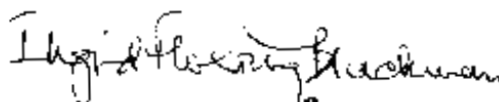
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 created a new statutory duty/on AONB local authorities to publish AONB Management Plans. This requirement, alongside other new obligations on a wide range of bodies to have regard for AONB purposes, represents a great opportunity to develop and strengthen local partnerships that are the essence of positive AONB management. The implementation on the ground of well planned medium to long term strategies can only be of benefit to both the communities that make up the AONB as well as the people who visit it.

This guide provides AONB managers and their partners with a toolkit of techniques and good practice to enable them to produce an AONB Management Plan of the highest quality. It is illustrated with many examples of good practice and has been written with the full involvement of experienced AONB staff and partners.

We hope that this guide will lead to outcomes on the ground that will conserve and enhance our finest countryside both for those that live there and for those who visit - for now and for future generations.



Ewen Cameron
Chairman of The
Countryside Agency



Ingrid Floering-Blackman
Chairman of the Association for
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Please note that these appendices apply to the version of this guidance produced for AONBs in England.

Summary

Purpose

This is a summary of the guidance produced by the Countryside Agency to assist local authorities, AONB staff units, AONB partners and others concerned with the production and implementation of AONB Management Plans in England. A parallel text has been produced by the Countryside Council for Wales to cover Welsh AONBs.

The aims of the guide are to:

- assist local authorities and conservation boards to discharge their statutory functions with regard to the production of AONB Management Plans;
- help ensure that Management Plans that are produced are appropriate to the needs of the AONB, have the commitment of all AONB partners¹ and other stakeholders, are implemented, and their policy objectives achieved.

CRoW

Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) consolidates earlier legislation regarding the designation and purposes of AONBs. It also adds some important new provisions which:

- allow the Secretary of State to establish conservation boards for individual AONBs, to which local authority functions (with the exception of development planning) can be transferred;
- require 'relevant authorities' (public bodies etc.) to 'have regard' to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB;
- require AONB local authorities or conservation boards to prepare and publish an AONB Management Plan and to review it at intervals in line with the CRoW act clauses.

Management Plans and management planning

In AONBs which existed prior to CRoW, a new Plan must be published by 1st April 2004; in the case of a new AONB a Management Plan must be published within three years of the date of designation. Where a conservation board has been established, responsibility for Plan production rests with the board and it must publish its Management Plan within two years of its formation. Where an AONB falls within the areas of more than one local authority, these authorities should prepare and publish a joint Plan. In practice, local authorities will normally look to AONB partnerships to carry out this function for them. AONB Management Plans must be reviewed at not less than five year intervals.

The goal of AONB Management Plans and their production is to ensure continuity and consistency of management over time, conserving the AONB for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

1. The **AONB partnership** means the local authorities in whose area the AONB is, or the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (where these have been established) or other form of partnership through which the local authority responsibilities are exercised. Alternatively, it may mean an AONB conservation board established by Parliament to which local authority responsibilities and functions have been transferred.

An AONB Management Plan is a document which:

- highlights the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB, and the importance of its different features;
- presents an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities;
- sets out agreed policies incorporating specific objectives which will help secure that vision;
- identifies what needs to be done, by whom, and when, in order to achieve these outcomes;
- states how the condition of the AONB and the effectiveness of its management will be monitored.

Management planning is the process through which such Plans are produced, implemented and reviewed. The process is as important as the Plan itself. It should:

- bring together people involved with the AONB, provide a bridge between ‘managers’ and users, and between different groups of stakeholders;
- achieve consensus about the AONB’s significance, reconcile multiple uses and conflicting interests, and generate a commitment to the plan and its policies;
- identify roles and responsibilities of partners and others, specify outcomes, and attract resources.

A distinction may be made in AONB management planning between strategy planning and action planning. Every AONB Management Plan should have at least two elements:

1. a strategy for the AONB - an ambitious, visionary statement of policy, which identifies specific objectives and the methods through which these will be achieved;
2. a more focused statement of who will do what in order to achieve the objectives and move towards the vision.

It may be appropriate for these to be in two documents, an AONB Strategy Plan, reviewed on a five year (or shorter) cycle, and an AONB Action Plan, which looks forward perhaps three years and is reviewed annually on a rolling basis.

Design matters. The AONB Management Plan is an important promotional document. Presentation is important and issues of style and format should be considered at an early stage.

The process

Planning should:

- be a participative process that seeks to integrate and reflect the views and aspirations of a wide range of AONB stakeholders who may be involved or interested in the future management of the area;
- involve a variety of different methods each of which has its own advantages and limitations;

- be itself carefully planned to meet the specific circumstances of the AONB, and to take account of the time and resources available.

The AONB Plan should be the vehicle by which the work of different players and partner organisations is coordinated and by which its outcomes are judged. Implementation of the AONB Management Plan and coordinating action by others is a core function of the AONB staff unit, as is monitoring and reporting on progress against management targets. Production and publication of annual reviews of activity and achievements is a requirement for Countryside Agency grant aid.

The product

There is no 'ideal' format, structure or content of an AONB Plan. These need to be tailored to the needs of the AONB and to the functions intended for the Plan, which will go well beyond the functions of just the AONB staff unit. AONB Plans will normally contain:

- An **introduction** which sets the context for the AONB and its Plan in a positive way.
- A **description** of the AONB and an **assessment** of its significance and special qualities.
- A statement of the principal **issues** affecting the AONB.
- A report of the **participative process** used to produce the Plan.
- A **vision** for the AONB's future.
- The management **policies** for the AONB in the form of measurable **objectives** and the methods by which these will be achieved.
- **Tasks** that need to be undertaken to achieve the objectives.
- How the implementation of the plan and the condition of the AONB is to be **monitored** and how the plan itself is to be **reviewed**. Plans should address all issues relevant to the future of the AONB. These might include:
 - Natural beauty, landscape character, biodiversity (habitats and species), archaeology and historic features, agriculture and forestry, mineral extraction, development issues, waste disposal, water cycle and coastal management.
 - Public understanding and enjoyment, tourism and informal recreation access to the countryside including Rights of Way and Access to Open Country, interpretation, education and promotion.
 - Economic and social well-being of local communities, the local economy and employment, housing and the built environment, transport and traffic.

There should be a two-way relationship between the AONB Management Plan and other plans and policies, including statutory development plans and community strategies. Where appropriate, sections of the AONB Plan may be adopted separately as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

There is no formal deposit or approval process for AONB Management Plans, but local authorities in England proposing to adopt, review or publish such a Plan must give due notice to the Countryside Agency and to English Nature and must take any observations made into account. Conservation boards must in addition copy their draft Plans to all relevant local authorities. They must then send a copy of the Plan to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

About this guide

Background

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs²) include some of our finest countryside. The 41 AONBs in England and Wales cover some 15 per cent of the land surface. They are living and working landscapes, protected by law. They are inhabited by thousands of people and are loved and visited by many thousands more.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW³) raised the profile of AONBs and increased the powers and duties of the local authorities and conservation boards who are responsible for their management. AONBs have a vital and increasingly important role to play in the conservation of our countryside's natural and cultural heritage.

Management Plans are widely recognised as a vital tool for effective management and most AONBs already have them. CRoW made it obligatory for local authorities and conservation boards to produce new AONB Management Plans⁴ for their areas, and to revise these Plans at regular intervals. In practice, these Plans will usually be produced with and through a wide partnership of local organisations and interests.

Purpose

This guide has been produced by the Countryside Agency to assist AONB partnerships⁵, AONB staff units, AONB partners and others concerned with the production and implementation of AONB Management Plans in England. A parallel text has been produced by the Countryside Council for Wales to cover Welsh AONBs.

The aims of the guide are to:

- Assist local authorities and conservation boards to discharge their statutory functions with regard to the production of AONB Management Plans.
- Help ensure that Management Plans that are produced are appropriate to the needs of the AONB, that they have the commitment of those who have to deliver their policies, and consequently they are implemented and the policy objectives achieved.
- Provide consistent advice that will help secure the conservation and sustainable management of the AONB landscapes – for ever and for everyone.

It does this by providing:

- An outline of the legislative and policy context of AONBs and the obligations these place on local authorities and conservation boards, particularly with respect to Management Plans.
- Advice on the role and functions of AONB Management Plans and

2. Acronyms such as AONB, CRoW, DEFRA and DTLR are used throughout this guide for the sake of brevity.

3. The legislation is summarised in Section 1.1.1 **The Countryside and Rights of Way Act**. A more detailed account is given in Appendix 1: **Legislation and legal obligations**.

4. The AONB 'Management Plan' is sometimes called, simply, the **AONB Plan** and both terms are used interchangeably in this guide. Sometimes the AONB Plan is called a **Strategy Plan** and in this case a separate **Action Plan** is often produced. Management Plans, Strategy Plans and Action Plans should be distinguished from other kinds of plan produced for the AONB such as the Business Plan, Interpretive Plan or Nature Conservation Strategy.

5. The **AONB partnership** means the local authorities in whose area the AONB is, or the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (where these have been established) or other partnership through which the local authority responsibilities are exercised. Alternatively, it may mean an AONB conservation board established by Parliament to which local authority responsibilities and functions have been transferred.

on the process of their production and review, particularly with regard to the need for wide public consultation and for ‘ownership’ of the plan by AONB partners.

- Guidance on the content and structure of AONB Management Plans and ideas for their presentation and promotion.
- Recommendations for ways to ensure that an AONB Management Plan results in action ‘on the ground’, emphasising the need for ongoing monitoring and review.
- Examples of ‘good practice’ of all the above, including facsimile extracts taken from some existing Management Plans, and accounts of actual experience of planning for AONBs.

AONBs in England and Wales are extremely varied, in terms of their geography, their ecology, the organisational and political provenance of their administrative arrangements, and the scale of their operations. There is no ‘ideal’ structure or content for an AONB Management Plan, nor any ‘right’ way of producing one. ‘Planning by numbers’ seldom produces good results. This guide provides a non-prescriptive approach which focuses on principles that need to be tailored to local circumstances.

One principle stands out above all others: AONB Management Plans should have a wide and common ‘ownership’. They are not just plans for the AONB partnerships; an AONB management plan is to ensure outcomes for the landscape itself and for all who live or work in it, visit it or otherwise have an interest in it.

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is primarily for AONB local authorities. However as with the Management Plans that will be produced with this guidance, so the guidance itself is not just for AONB related staff. It is for all those with an interest in AONBs, including those who may need to use or may wish to consult an AONB Management Plan. This includes:

- Elected members and officers of county and district councils.
- The AONB partnership and its individual members.
- Statutory undertakers (such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications utilities) and public bodies (including government departments and agencies) who are required by law to ‘have regard’ to the purposes of AONBs in exercising their functions.
- Funding bodies.
- Other organisations with an interest in the way the AONB is managed (e.g. voluntary organisations concerned with landscape or wildlife).
- Parish councils and community leaders.
- Major land owners, land managers and their advisers, and concerned residents within the AONB.

How to use the guide

This guide is in four sections:

- **Section 1**– sets the legal and policy context for AONBs and for AONB Management Plans (see page 12).
- **Section 2**– focuses on the planning process: how to produce and revise AONB Management Plans (see page 30).
- **Section 3**– deals with the content of AONB Management Plans and their presentation (see page 43).
- **Section 4**– considers the implementation of AONB Management Plans, including monitoring and review (see page 60).

Section 1 provides an overview of relevance to all the groups listed above. Sections 2-4 offer more detailed guidance on the production, content and implementation of AONB Management Plans. Those who are required to produce or revise an AONB Plans will probably find it easiest to read the whole guide through and then to use individual sections for guidance on particular topics.

The **Checklist** inside the back cover (see page 128) will help to ensure that everything has been covered.

The **Appendices** give a more detailed account of the legislation on AONBs, information on sources of information that may be used in the preparation of the AONB Plan, a list of relevant publications and a list of useful organisations and addresses, a note on the use of information technology in AONB management, and information on funding of AONB partnerships staff and projects. These can be found at the back of this publication (see page 71 onwards).

This guide is complimentary to (see page 71 onwards) **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A guide for AONB partnership members** (CA 24) also published by the Countryside Agency. This publication gives general information on the purposes on AONB designation and an introduction on how partnerships and staff can work to ensure the long term conservation and enhancement of AONBs.

1. AONBs and management planning

1.1 Legislation, policy and the role of AONBs

The primary statutory purpose of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

‘Natural Beauty’ is not just an aesthetic concept, and ‘Landscape’ means more than just ‘scenery’. The statutory definition of ‘Natural Beauty’ includes flora, fauna and geological and physiographic features. The natural beauty of AONBs is partly due to nature, and is partly the product of many centuries of human modification of ‘natural’ features. Landscape encompasses everything - ‘natural’ and human - that makes an area distinctive: geology, climate, soil, plants, animals, communities, archaeology, buildings, the people who live in it, past and present, and the perceptions of those who visit it.

AONBs are human-made, cultural landscapes. They are also living landscapes, both by virtue of the species and habitats within them, and because their special qualities can only be maintained by continuing human activity. Very little in the English landscape can be described as ‘natural’, being the result of the combined effects of many centuries of human influence to create the landscape of today. They cannot be frozen in time, they may and will change. What is important is to understand what makes them special, then to develop a vision of how they can be sustained into the future. This will mean encouraging activities which conserve and enhance the special character of the AONB, and minimising activities which threaten this special character. That is what AONB management and management planning is all about.

AONBs are home to thousands of people and are places of recreation for many thousands more. Most of the land in AONBs is privately owned, and most is managed to provide a livelihood for those who work it. AONBs are multi-use landscapes, although farming is the predominant land use in the majority of them. The management of AONBs involves working with and through many different groups and organisations - the AONB partners.

1.1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 (CRoW) significantly altered the context within which AONBs are managed. Some of the changes, including provisions giving the public access to open country, and amendments to legislation on Rights of Way, apply to the countryside as a whole. Part IV of the Act relates specifically to AONBs. CRoW consolidates and strengthens earlier legislation concerning AONBs, reaffirms the purposes of designation, and confirms the powers of local authorities to take appropriate action to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of AONBs.

In addition the Act:

- Places a duty on all public bodies and statutory undertakers to 'have regard' to the purposes of AONBs.
- Establishes a process for creating AONB conservation boards, where this is locally supported.
- Creates a statutory responsibility for local authorities and conservation boards to produce and regularly to review AONB Management Plans.

These changes bring the legal status of AONBs and the powers of AONB partnerships closer to those of National Parks and National Park Authorities. The opportunity to establish conservation boards, the requirement to produce management plans, and the duty of relevant authorities to have regard to AONB purposes all have significant implications for AONB management.

1.1.2. AONB authorities and partnerships

Statutory responsibility for AONB management and management planning normally falls to the local authority or authorities within whose areas the AONB lies. Particularly where a number of different county or district councils are involved, those responsibilities may be discharged through an AONB Committee, often constituted as a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC). JACs generally include representatives of amenity and land use interests as well as of the local authorities. They have increasingly been the means of promoting a 'partnership' approach to AONB management. In some cases JACs have been comparatively inactive. The legal requirement to produce a management plan will provide an ideal opportunity to re-invigorate these partnerships.

Where a conservation board is established, statutory responsibility for AONB management is transferred from the local authorities to the board. A conservation board is an independent 'body corporate', responsible and publicly accountable for its own administration and management, able to employ its own staff, to acquire, own and dispose of land, and to make charges for its services. Unlike National Park Authorities, AONB conservation boards may not assume responsibility for development planning, which remains with the local authority.

In this guide we use the expression 'AONB partnership' as a generic term to include the local authority AONB Committee, a Joint Advisory Committee or a conservation board and for any more widely constituted body such as a Joint Advisory Committee (or its equivalent).

The prime purpose of an AONB partnership is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their AONB. Like local authorities, conservation boards also have a duty under CRoW to increase public understanding and enjoyment of their AONB's special qualities, and to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local

communities. The social and economic role must be achieved ‘without incurring significant expenditure’, which in practice means that conservation boards must do this by working with local authorities and other bodies. This underscores the importance of partners’ roles, as they have the powers and the capacity to achieve these social and economic objectives.

The focus of an AONB Management Plan will be on the special qualities of the area, but these of course are dependent on a wide range of different factors. Conservation, amenity, social and economic issues need therefore to be addressed in every AONB Management Plan regardless of the administrative arrangements for the AONB. In practice the approach of the most effective partnerships will be very similar to the approach used by a conservation board.

1.1.3. Management Plans and CRoW

Under CRoW, there is a duty on local authorities to prepare AONB Management Plans, to publish them and to review them at intervals. In AONBs which existed prior to CRoW, a new plan must be published no later than 1st April 2004; in the case of a new AONB a Management Plan must be published within three years of the date of designation. Where a conservation board has been established, responsibility for Plan production, publication and review rests with the board. A conservation board must publish its Management Plan within two years of its formation. Where an AONB falls within the areas of more than one local authority, these authorities should prepare and publish a joint Plan. In practice, local authorities will normally look to AONB partnerships to carry out this function for them.

Many AONBs already had in place a non-statutory Management Plan prior to CRoW. As of mid 2000, 30 of the 41 AONBs in England and Wales had an adopted Management Plan or one in an advanced stage of production. A further five AONBs had some other equivalent documentation, such as a strategic plan or an early draft management plan. Such plans may be reviewed and adopted by the AONB partnership, within the same timescales as above. A ‘pre-CRoW’ Management Plan should not however be adopted purely as a formality. Review should involve the participation of all interested parties, who may well perceive a ‘post-CRoW’ Management Plan as a more significant document than its predecessor.

Once adopted and published, Management Plans must be reviewed at intervals not exceeding five years. The exception is where a conservation board has adopted a pre-existing local authority plan (which it may do within six months of the board’s establishment), in which case the first review must be within three years.

Local authorities in England proposing to adopt, review or publish a management plan must give due notice to the Countryside Agency and

to English Nature and must take any observations made into account. Conservation boards must also copy their plans to all relevant local authorities. Such Plans (and any proposed amendments) must be copied to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs although they do not need to be formally approved by him/her.

1.1.4. The Countryside Agency

The Countryside Agency has a number of functions in relation to AONBs in England. It:

- Designates AONBs (subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State).
- Advises government on AONB matters, notably on issues of policy and funding.
- Is a statutory consultee on land use planning policy and development control issues within AONBs.
- Is consulted by government before it establishes a conservation board or makes national appointments to a board.
- Is the route by which government funding is made available to AONBs, irrespective of local management arrangements. The Agency provides funding for a proportion of the core costs of managing AONBs and also supports specific projects which contribute to AONB purposes and are in line with agency policies.
- Issues guidance and advice on management of AONBs.

CRoW requires the Agency to be consulted on the production and revision of AONB Management Plans, and for its advice to be taken into account. In practice the Agency is regularly and closely involved in the production and amendment of such plans through its regional offices and staff. As well as being a statutory requirement, the preparation, implementation and regular review of an appropriate Management Plan is viewed by the Agency as a pre-requisite for AONB funding.

The Agency believes that its combined environmental, social and economic remit can enable it to advise and support an approach to AONB management that delivers the purpose of AONBs in a truly sustainable way.

1.1.5. Relevant authorities

Organisations ('relevant authorities') who must have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONBs include:

- Public bodies including all arms of both central and local government (including, for example, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Environment Agency (EA), English Heritage (EH), Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Forestry Commission (FC), English Nature (EN), parish councils and joint committees of local authorities.
- Statutory undertakers, including public utilities such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications companies.

This legal requirement to ‘have regard’ to the purposes of AONB designation should act as an incentive for all agencies (whether or not covered by CRow) to commit themselves to the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan. It may be easier for them to do this where they have participated in Plan production, and even more so where they are represented on the JAC or conservation board.

Government agencies with a critical land management role, in particular DEFRA, EN, EA and FC, should be members of the AONB partnership and should play a full role both in the preparation and in the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. Their representative should feed back to parent bodies to ensure integration of agricultural, environmental and other policies affecting the AONB, with those of the AONB Management Plan.

1.2 The role, purpose and function of Plans

1.2.1. What is an AONB Management Plan?

An **AONB Management Plan** is a document which:

- Highlights the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB, the importance of its landscape features and identifies those that are vulnerable to change.
- Presents an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities.
- Sets out agreed policies incorporating specific objectives which will help secure that vision.
- Identifies what needs to be done, by whom, and when, in order to achieve these objectives.
- Identifies the means by which objectives and actions will be reviewed.

Management planning is the process through which such plans are produced and implemented.

In terms of **legal status**:

- AONB Management Plans are statutory in that local authorities (or conservation boards where established) are required by law to produce them.
- An AONB Management Plan should set out the local authorities’ or conservation board’s policies for the AONB and also indicate how these will be achieved.
- The importance and role of AONB Management Plans is underlined by the duty on public bodies, including local authorities, to have regard to the statutory purposes of AONBs in carrying out their functions.
- AONB Management Plans do not override local development plans but relevant sections of the plan can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) where appropriate (see Section 1.3.2 Development plans, community strategies and access to the countryside on page 25).

- AONB Management Plans should always seek to link across to other statutory plans, strategies and land management schemes which impinge on their geographical area (e.g. local transport plans, Community Strategies, Biodiversity Action Plans) in order to both influence and support them (see Section 1.3 Relation of AONB Management Plans to other plans and policies on page 22).

Although production and review of an AONB Management Plan is a statutory requirement on the local authorities or conservation board and should formulate the local authorities' or conservation board's policies for managing the AONB, it need not be a dry technical document. The Plan should be for the AONB as a whole, not just the local authorities own area. It should be seen as much more than a guide for the activities of an AONB staff unit, it should reflect the aims and aspirations of the multiplicity of AONB stakeholders and it should be accessible to a broad audience. The requirement to publish the Management Plan, and to make it publicly available, provides an additional reason to focus on issues of presentation and accessibility as well as content.

Land within AONBs is often in multiple ownership and control. AONB Management Plans rely on co-operation and goodwill by many different individuals and organisations if they are to be effective. The AONB Management Plan can be a powerful inspirational tool, for promoting a shared vision of what the AONB is about now, and what it could be in the future, as well as a vehicle for delivering action 'on the ground'. Its production and review is an opportunity to generate or renew a broad consensus on the AONB's purposes and management needs and to secure the active commitment of key stakeholders to contribute to them. It can also be an educational tool, helping to change attitudes and behaviours.

1.2.2. Strategy Plans and Action Plans

A distinction may be made in AONB management planning between strategy planning and action planning. Every AONB Management Plan should have at least two elements:

1. A strategy for the AONB - an ambitious, visionary statement of policy, which identifies the key facts and issues affecting the character of the AONB, together with a set of specific objectives and the methods through which these will be achieved.
2. A more focused statement of precisely who will do what in order to achieve the objectives and move towards the vision.

Both elements may be contained within a single document, the AONB Management Plan, in which case the tasks or action points may be distributed through the document, associated with particular policies. Alternatively there may be two different documents, a Strategy Plan and an Action Plan. The latter will often be updated annually,

looking forward maybe three years. The Statutory Management Plan will be supported by a substantial body of technical documents (e.g. Landscape Character Assessment, Biodiversity Plan) that should be generally accessible to all with an interest.

1.2.3. Why plan?

Production of the Plan is an opportunity as well as an obligation. Effective management planning enables those involved in the AONB to set the agenda for change, as well as managing change effectively. This will be achieved through the process of Plan production, and through the Plan and its implementation. Table 1 lists some of the benefits which can accrue from management planning.

The process of producing or reviewing an AONB Management Plan (see Section 2 on page 30), and the contents of the Plan that results (Section 3 on page 43) are both important. Figure 1 on page 20 illustrates some of the links between the process of management planning and the contents of the Management Plan.

Table 1 Why Plan? The purposes and functions of AONB planning

The process of producing an AONB Management Plan can:	Particular sections within the Plan may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together people involved with the AONB, provide a bridge between 'managers' and 'users' • Achieve consensus about the significance of the AONB and a shared commitment to conserve it • Manage multiple uses and conflicting interests within it • Relate the AONB to the wider landscape, ecological, economic and social context • Generate a commitment to agreed management policies • Identify roles and responsibilities of partners and others • Specify actions and outcomes which can be monitored • Ensure objectives can be achieved within the resources available • Promote and publicise the AONB and its purposes • Attract resources; and provide the basis for securing grant aid • Fulfil the legal obligations of the local authority or conservation board • Ensure continuity and consistency of management over time, conserving the AONB for the use and enjoyment of future generations • Create a sense of place for local residents and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about the AONB • Identify its value and the significance of its features • Articulate a vision for its future • Explain what management is intended to achieve • Outline the means which will be used to do this • Identify the partners who have 'signed up' to the management plan and its policies • Say who will do what, when, and what resources are required • Provide a way of checking the condition of the AONB and the effectiveness of its management

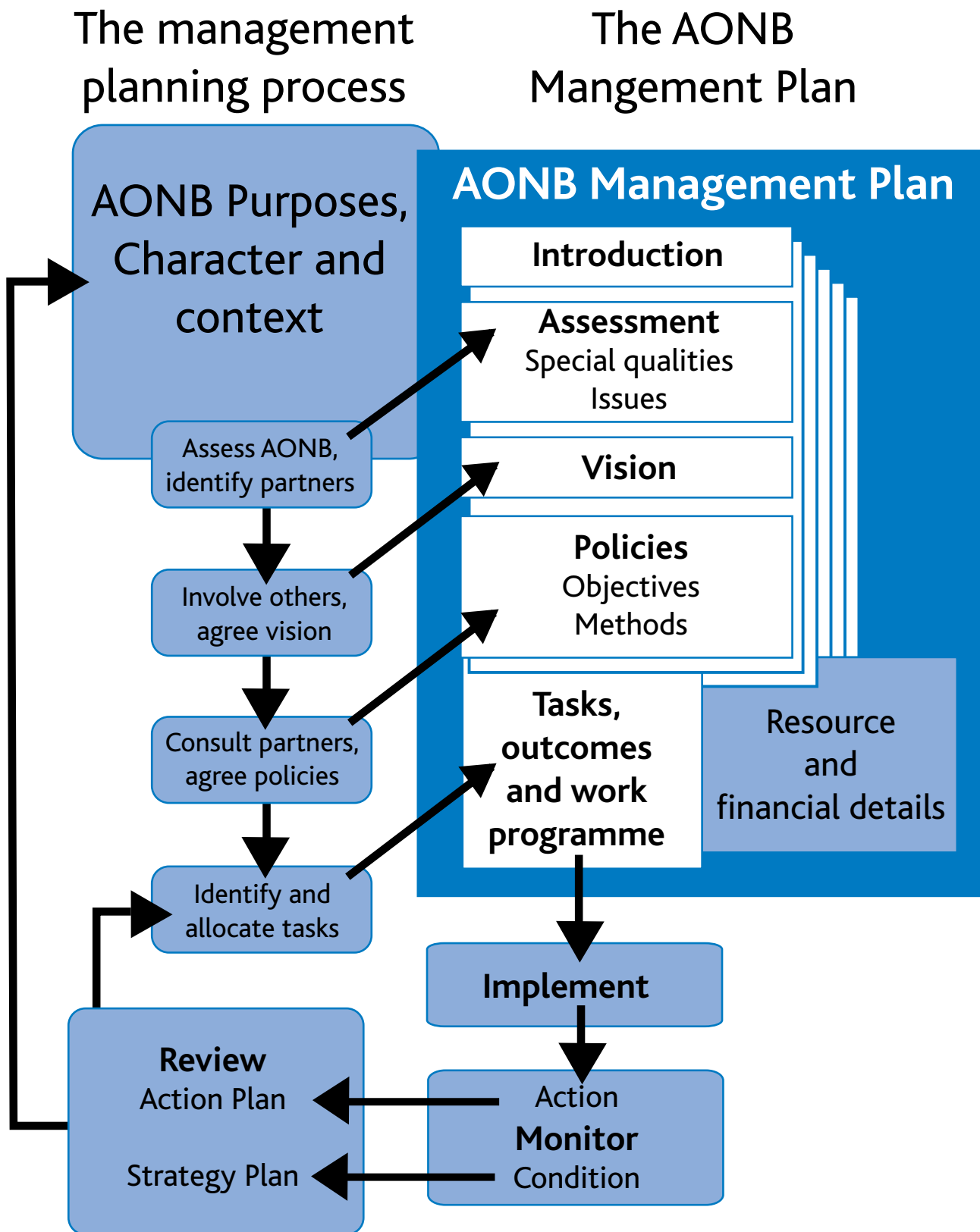
1.2.4. Who is the Plan for?

The AONB Management Plan should be prepared with a clear idea of the its target audiences and who will be referring to it. The Plan will be read by a wider audience than those that were involved in its production.

Audiences for an AONB Management Plan are likely to include:

- Local authority members and officers.
- Government departments and statutory agencies - for example, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and the Regional Development Agencies.
- Statutory undertakers - for example, telecommunications and water companies.
- The AONB partnership - the JAC or conservation board.
- AONB unit staff.
- Other organisations operating within the AONB including voluntary bodies and local branches of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as CPRE.
- Parish councils and community leaders.
- Land owners and land managers within the AONB.
- Individuals: residents, people who work in the AONB, regular visitors.
- Funding bodies e.g. the Countryside Agency, Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Others, including prospective partners who are not yet involved with AONB management.

Figure 1



1.2.5. Terminology

The terminology used in planning is variable but there are a number of terms that may be applied to an AONB Management Plan.

A summary of terms is listed below in Table 2.

Table 2 Terms used in AONB Management Plans and planning

Equivalent or similar terms or headings that may be used in AONB management planning	Meaning
Introduction , foreword	Explains the purpose of the Plan
Strategy Plan , five-year plan	An assessment of the key facts and issues affecting the character of the AONB, and a statement of management policies
Assessment , description, analysis	The significance of the AONB, and of its features; the values and need of local residents, visitors and other stakeholders; and the issues of management
Vision , Aims, ideal/ long term/ strategic objectives, goals, enduring purpose, statement of significance	Shared aspirations for the future development of the AONB
Policy	Decisions about what the partners in the AONB have agreed to do and how they intend to do it
Objectives , targets, outcomes	What is to be achieved by AONB management
Methods , prescriptions, actions	How and by what means the objectives are to be met
Action plan , operational / implementation/ annual plan	The part of the plan that breaks down the policies into tasks or projects
Tasks , action points, projects, targets, outcomes	Defined units of work for which responsibility is allocated to the AONB unit ('core activities') or to AONB partners and which should be completed within a defined time
Work programme , annual plan	The list of tasks for the AONB unit or for all AONB partners in order to implement the Management Plan
Financial plan , budget, costing	The estimated expenditure and income expected or required to carry out the tasks and to achieve the objectives
Monitoring , audit, evaluation	Monitoring of both action and condition (see below)
Monitoring action , operational/ implementation/compliance monitoring, performance review.	Checking whether the tasks identified in the Action Plan have been done
Monitoring condition , surveillance, Quality of Life counts.	Checking whether the objectives have been achieved
Indicators	Measures of specific features which enable AONB condition to be monitored
Review , revision	The arrangements for revising the plan or parts of the plan
Action Plan Review , operational/annual/short-term review	Analysis of whether the tasks specified in the Action Plan have been done, and planning the next round of tasks
Strategic Review , five year review, management plan review	Analysis and revision of the whole plan, including the management strategy, vision, policies and tasks

1.3. Relation of AONB Management Plans to other plans and policies

One of the key ‘planning’ roles of the AONB Management Plan is to integrate all relevant policies into a single framework. Many other plans and other policy documents relating to the AONB area are likely to exist independently of the plan (see Table 3 on page 23). Others will be produced or reviewed during the lifetime of the AONB Plan. It is important to consider how each of these documents might relate to the AONB Plan. They should certainly be consulted during its production (see Section 2.3.3 Documentary inputs and research on page 38).

There should be a two-way relationship between the AONB Management Plan and plans produced by other bodies. The AONB Plan should not override other plans. Neither should the AONB Plan necessarily be limited by policies within other plans, though some, for example local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), may have policies or targets which may have to be incorporated.

The AONB Management Plan should aim to present the highest shared aspirations for the area, seeking to present an integrated vision for the AONB. In developing its vision the AONB partnership should use others’ policies as a starting point, aiming when appropriate to go further than other agencies might have gone. The AONB Plan should not simply reflect the lowest common denominator of existing policies.

Where other plans or policies are out of step with this vision, and with the AONB policies which flow from it, the AONB Management Plan should indicate how those other plans and policies could be improved. The AONB Management Plan should seek to be a strategic plan that influences the other plans listed above.

All policies should have regard to the context of the AONB, including surrounding areas. Some policies in the AONB Management Plan (e.g. proposals for transport schemes) may need to extend beyond the AONB boundary.

1.3.1. AONB management planning and sustainability

Sustainability has been defined as the management of change to meet equitably the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The government’s Sustainable Development Strategy⁶ defines four objectives for sustainable development at a local, national and global level:

- Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone.
- Effective protection of the environment.
- Prudent use of natural resources and
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Management planning provides the means of achieving this within an AONB. Sustainability is a theme that should run through the whole

6. A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development of the UK (Cm 4345), 1999, HMSO.

Table 3 Relation of AONB Management Plans to other plans

This table can be used as a checklist for drawing up a list of plans which apply to any particular AONB, and the organisation which produces them

Plan	Usually produced by
Structure Plans, Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans. Community Strategies, Statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans. Local Agenda 21 Plans. Best Value Plans. Rural Development Priority Area Strategies/Programmes. Conservation Area Statements, Local Transport Plans. Housing Strategies, Economic Development Plans, Anti-poverty Strategies, Crime Reduction Strategies, Cultural Strategies and other plans linked to neighbourhood renewal.	Local authority
Integrated coastal zone management strategies, Shoreline Management Plans; Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHAMPs), Estuary Management Plans, Nature Conservation strategies, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).	Environment Agency/Local authority/ English Nature/wildlife trusts
England's Rural Development Programme and its Regional Chapters (e.g. Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the Rural Enterprise Scheme).	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Village Appraisals, Village Design Statements, Parish Plans.	Parish council, or other parish based organisation
Market Town Plans.	Market Town Partnerships
Tourism strategies, Countryside Access Strategies.	Local authority and/or Regional Tourist Board
Single Programme Document for EU Structural Programmes; Regional Planning Guidance; Regional Economic Strategies.	Govt Office for the Region/regional planning body
Planning Policy Guidance.	DTLR Department for Transport, Local Government and the regions
Landscape Assessment; Landscape Strategies; Countryside Character Area Descriptions.	Local authority/AONB partnership/Countryside Agency
River Basin Management Plans, Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs); Catchment Management Plans.	Environment Agency
Asset Management Plans.	Water companies
Archaeological surveys.	Local authority and/or English Heritage
Natural Area Strategies, Lifescape Pilots, National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)	English Nature
Health Improvement Plans.	Health authorities
Site management plans, estate management plans and whole farm plans.	Private landowners, National Trust, wildlife trust, English Nature and others
Regional Economic Strategies	Regional Development Agencies

No hierarchy is implied by the order in which plans are listed in this box

Plan, and the way it is produced: it is not an optional add on. Partly as a result of their designation, and the extra resources this brings to the area, AONBs can be used as a test bed of innovative policy for wider rural areas. It is important:

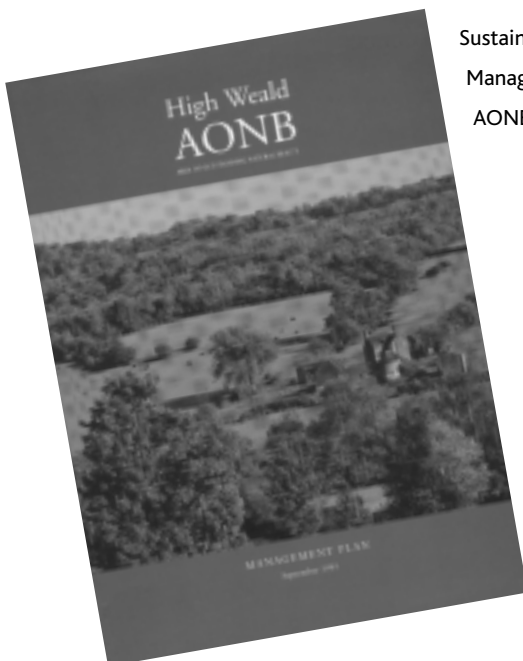
- To consider the AONB as a whole as well as the specific needs of its different areas and of the different interest groups that use it.
- To achieve a commitment to the AONB and its Management Plan by local communities, landowners, visitors and other stakeholders.
- To ensure that all management policies and subsequent actions are appropriate, practical, effective and realistic and that their implementation is carried out in a sustainable way that does not harm the AONB's special qualities.

'Quality of Life Capital' is a multi-agency approach⁷ which provides one way of analysing what is important about the countryside to people, and what must be kept or must be compensated for when development takes place. Quality of Life Capital includes:

- **Environmental Capital** - the character and natural features of the countryside including its landscape and wildlife diversity, attractiveness, sense of place, and opportunities for enjoyment which provide benefits we all value.
- **Social capital** - existing in rural communities, in the form of facilities, services and networks of advice, mutual support, and skills which can help bind people together.
- **Economic capital** - the benefits to people of employment and trading activity.

7. Quality of Life Capital: Managing environmental, social and economic benefits, 2001, published by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency.

Example 1



Sustainability means practical policies, not just pious words. The High Weald Management Plan stimulated the production of a joint strategy of South East regional AONB partnerships for regional branding'.

Example 2

The Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Management Plan has sections which address sustainable development in terms of:

- **Community** – ensuring that a sense of community identity is maintained rather than overwhelmed by tourism.
- **Environment** – ensuring that the essential elements of what visitors come to see are preserved.
- **Economy** – ensuring that businesses stay in business (including those which do not depend on tourism) and are not disadvantaged by tourism.

1.3.2. Development plans, community strategies and access to the countryside

The AONB Management Plan should indicate how it fits in with existing statutory plans. In some AONBs there may be more than a dozen such Plans.

Development plans; Current Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that ‘the primary objective of designation is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Local authorities should reflect this objective in their preparation of structure and local plans and in exercise of development control’⁸. Legislation places a duty on the Countryside Agency to give advice on development matters within AONBs, and it also places a duty on local authorities to consult the Countryside Agency on development plans, access agreements and access orders in AONBs.

Development plans exclude policies that do not relate to land use planning, however this is no reason why AONB Management Plans should not address planning matters. In AONBs the Management Plan can be an instrument for securing better consistency across the area and it may be the principal way that the AONB partnership can seek to influence planning matters. The AONB Management Plan may do this by affirming the strengths of existing development plans and by pointing out inadequacies in them or inconsistencies between them. AONB Management Plans should set out future development policies that AONB partnerships might wish to see applied within the AONB. It may also set commons standards for dealing with AONB wide issues: e.g. telecommunication masts will also be important for AONB partnerships to be involved in the preparation and review of development plans themselves.

Once local authorities have approved the AONB Management Plan, those elements in it that relate to the development and use of land, and which supplement and support the policies set out in the development plan, may be material considerations to be taken into account in determining a planning application. Relevant sections of the Plan which relate to the policies of the local authorities concerned should readily lend themselves to being adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG – see Appendix 1: Legislation and legal obligations on page 71). In any case, local authority partners to the JAC should agree

8. PPG7: The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and social development, 1997, HMSO.

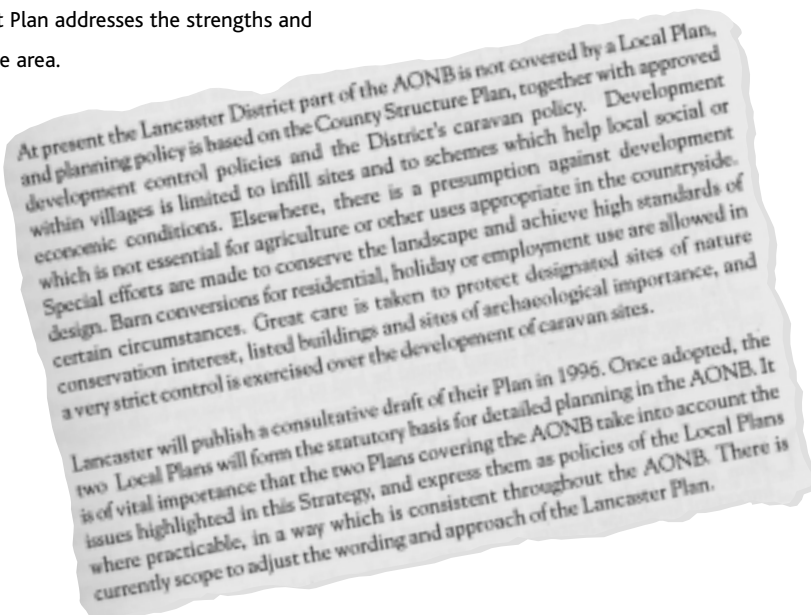
that AONB officers should be consulted on all planning matters (both strategic policies and individual cases) that have an impact on the AONB.

Community strategies; Under the Local Government Act, 2000, all local authorities have a duty to prepare community strategies. These aim to promote economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and local authorities have been given broad powers to help them do this. As with AONB management planning, the process by which community strategies are produced is as important as the final strategy itself. The government has stated that wide local 'ownership' of the planning process is vital and that this can be secured through a community planning partnership. It is clearly important that the AONB Management Plan and community strategies within the area are complementary so that they reflect and inform each other. Where possible, Plans should also be prepared in a complementary way: for example by shared consultation.

Access; Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, local highway authorities are required to prepare and publish Rights of Way improvement plans. These should take into account the existing and future needs of the public, including disabled people, and the opportunities provided for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation. AONB partnerships can expect to be consulted on the content of these plans.

Example 3

The Arnside and Silverdale AONB Management Plan addresses the strengths and weaknesses of existing planning policies for the area.

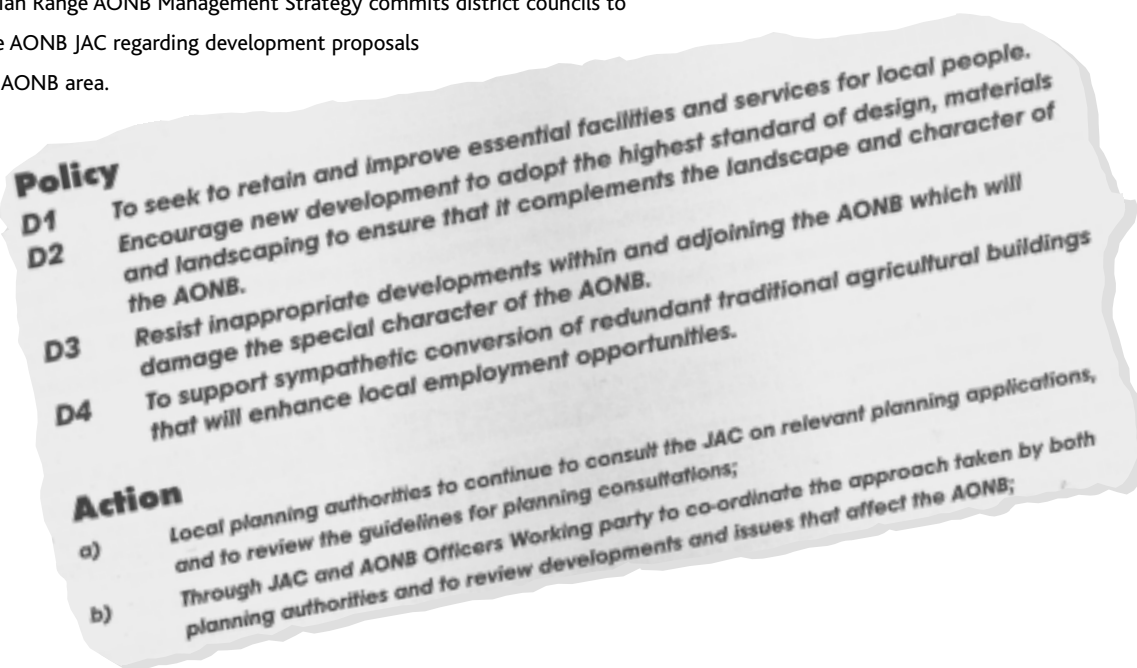


At present the Lancaster District part of the AONB is not covered by a Local Plan, and planning policy is based on the County Structure Plan, together with approved development control policies and the District's caravan policy. Development within villages is limited to infill sites and to schemes which help local social or economic conditions. Elsewhere, there is a presumption against development which is not essential for agriculture or other uses appropriate in the countryside. Special efforts are made to conserve the landscape and achieve high standards of design. Barn conversions for residential, holiday or employment use are allowed in certain circumstances. Great care is taken to protect designated sites of nature conservation interest, listed buildings and sites of archaeological importance, and a very strict control is exercised over the development of caravan sites.

Lancaster will publish a consultative draft of their Plan in 1996. Once adopted, the two Local Plans will form the statutory basis for detailed planning in the AONB. It is of vital importance that the two Plans covering the AONB take into account the issues highlighted in this Strategy, and express them as policies of the Local Plans where practicable, in a way which is consistent throughout the AONB. There is currently scope to adjust the wording and approach of the Lancaster Plan.

Example 4

The Clwydian Range AONB Management Strategy commits district councils to consult the AONB JAC regarding development proposals within the AONB area.



1.3.3. Other AONB policies and documents

A number of other documents may be specific to the AONB area, some of which may have been produced or commissioned by the AONB partnership itself. These documents may provide an important input to the draft AONB Management Plan. Other documents may need to be produced or revised as a consequence of the Plan.

One important document, prepared by the Countryside Agency for every AONB, is a published landscape assessment. More recent assessments are related to the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character approach. A landscape assessment should consist of a comprehensive description of component areas of the AONB, including cultural and nature conservation aspects, together with an assessment of current and potential threats. Consideration should be given to reviewing and updating landscape assessments at an early stage in the production of the Plan.

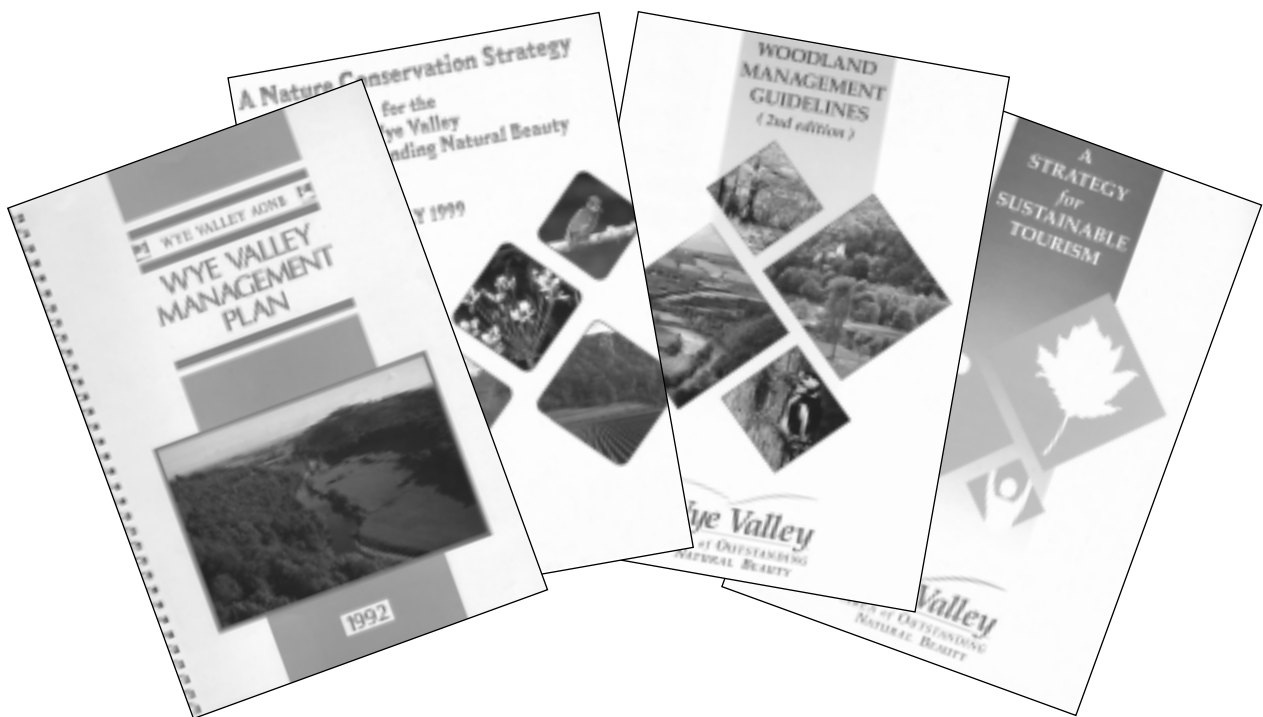
Some other AONB policy documents may need to be produced separately from the AONB Management Plan. It may be appropriate for the AONB partnership to develop a **Partnership Business Plan**. This may help coordinate the activities of the AONB unit and the partners that will flow from the AONB Management Plan, or be used as a bidding document showing matched funding inputs against, for example, a bid for European Structure Funds. A Partnership Business Plan is particularly useful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership so that it can be improved to deliver the AONB Management Plan more effectively.

In addition to drawing on existing documents as an input to the AONB Management Plan, the AONB partnership may wish to produce (or to encourage others to produce) **topic or sectoral AONB plans** dealing with particular issues. These topic plans will often be separate documents from the AONB Management Plan, but their policies should be integrated with it. For example, an AONB Nature Conservation Strategy will elaborate the broad policies contained in the AONB Plan and will include clear objectives and targets related to local BAPs. Guidance for such sectoral plans should be sought from the relevant agencies, in this case English Nature.

Although the initial emphasis is likely to be on the primary AONB purpose of landscape protection, other strategies may address issues such as energy use or the branding and promotion of local produce. Some topic plans will need to go beyond the AONB boundary. For example, a transport plan will need to consider roads and traffic in the surrounding area as well as within the AONB.

Example 5

Many AONBs have produced sectoral or thematic plans as an adjunct to the main Management Plan. Over the last five years, the Wye valley AONB has produced a Nature Conservation Strategy, a Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, and Woodland Management Guidelines, in addition to full Management Plan.



1.3.4. Special areas within the AONB

A variety of other defined or designated sites may exist within the AONB (see Table 4). Some of these (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments) are statutory designations, providing legal protection. Some are European Union designations, for example Special Areas of Conservation, or are internationally recognised e.g. World Heritage Sites. Other areas (for example Environmentally Sensitive Areas) may be managed in a particular way with the aid of grants from government bodies. Most of these areas will have their own management plans or management agreements. Where they are particularly significant, either individually or in aggregate, this should be recognised in the AONB Management Plan.

Coastlines. 16 AONBs include coastlines defined as Heritage Coasts, which also need to be managed in accordance with a Management Plan. Care should be taken to ensure that the policies for the AONB and for the Heritage Coast within it are complementary and consistent. Linked AONBs and Heritage Coasts should ideally be managed as a single unit, in which case a joint AONB/Heritage Coast Plan should cover the combined area.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategies exist or are in production for many coastlines. These are produced by partnerships of all interested organisations and so have many parallels to AONB Management Plans. AONB partnerships may wish to consider their response to issues such as coastal re-alignment, and lobby for the adoption of environmentally sympathetic approaches to the management of flood risk.

Table 4 Some other special areas that may exist within the AONB

Statutory designations	Non-statutory definitions and other areas	European and international designations
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Conservation Areas	Special Protection Area (SPA)
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Heritage Coast	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)	Country Parks	Ramsar Sites
Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)	Land under Countryside Stewardship Agreements	World Heritage Sites
Commons	Land Management Initiative areas	Biosphere Reserves
	Rural Priority Areas	Structural Fund Boundaries
	National Trust land	
	Community Forests	
	Local authority nature conservation designations	
	Historic battlefield sites	
	Heritage Landscapes	
	Historic parks and gardens	

2. The process – producing and revising an AONB Management Plan

The process of producing, or reviewing, an AONB Management Plan is as important as the plan itself. Planning should be a participative process that seeks to integrate and reflect the views and aspirations of a wide range of AONB stakeholders who may be involved or interested in the future management of the area. A number of different methods may be employed each with their own advantages and limitations. It is vital that the whole process itself be planned to meet the specific circumstances of the AONB, and that it takes account of the time and resources available.

This section of the guide:

- Identifies the main stages of the planning process.
- Emphasises the importance of effective participation and identifies some of the techniques that can be used.
- Encourages a 'bottom up' approach to planning that focuses, where possible, on achieving consensus, and generating mutual responsibility for the Plan and commitment to its implementation.

2.1. Overview

There is no standard formula for an AONB management planning process. The procedures adopted should be determined by:

- The outcomes required of the process, and the priority given to each of these.
- An assessment of the organisations and individuals that need to be involved.
- The purpose of the Management Plan and how it will be used.
- The timetable agreed for Plan production.
- The resources available, both in terms of staff time and in terms of money.
- Whether an existing Plan is to be used as the basis for review or whether the process should start 'from scratch'.

The main phases of the management planning process include:

1. **Getting started** – Establishment of a steering group, deciding on the overall scope of the Plan and the management planning process, agreeing on methodology, timetable, budget and staffing
2. **Participation** – Ensuring everyone can get involved.
3. **Drafting** – Production of a draft Plan, and its circulation for comment to partners, other organisations, interest groups and the wider community.

4. **Completion** – Production of the final Management Plan, promotion of the plan to stakeholders, adoption of the Plan by partners.
5. **Implementation and review** – Implementation of the Management Plan, review of its effectiveness, updating the plan (see Section 4 on page 60).

The process outlined in this section of the guide is not intended to be a precise blueprint, and the ordering of events may differ in different AONBs.

It is important to allow adequate time for each stage and to keep all stakeholders informed of progress. It is unlikely that the whole process of preparing a new Management Plan could be completed in much less than two years. In practice it may take longer. Where there is an existing Plan, around which consensus has already developed, it may be possible to reduce the planning period, however it is still important to start the review process early in the planning cycle.

Plan preparation should be carefully costed, with resources required for each stage identified, and the necessary funding sought: or if necessary the process should be matched against those that are available. Management Plan production is likely to take a minimum of 200 days of professional staff input. Involvement of consultants in a participation process and in drafting the plan could cost anything from £5,000 - £50,000. It is not always the case that the most costly technique is the most effective. Administration, printing, cartography, photography and promotion costs also need to be estimated and budgeted for at the start of the process (see Section 3.4.1 Design matters on page 56).

The planning process should not stop with the publication of the Management Plan. It is important that participation is sustained to support the Plan's implementation and to review continually its objectives and achievements. AONB management planning should therefore be seen as an ongoing process of analysis, objective setting, monitoring, evaluation and review, with partners and other stakeholders involved at every stage of the process.

2.2. Getting started

It is vital that the planning process itself should be planned. Early agreement should be secured on methods to be used, on a timetable of stages, the participants to be involved, and on tasks to be undertaken, by whom and when.

Steering group

One first step is to establish a management plan 'steering group', involving AONB officers and perhaps members of the partnership. The steering group might be the AONB partnership itself, or a sub-group specifically established to pilot the process. Setting up and running the

group should be done in much the same way as setting up a partnership for the AONB. The 'steering group' should include key individuals who represent a broad sample of partnership organisations. It should include local authorities, other funding agencies, interest groups and community representatives. The steering group should be relatively small and must be able to sustain the momentum of the management planning process. Its role is simply to manage the planning process, not to dictate policy.

Some initial considerations for the 'steering group' include the following:

- **What are we all about?** Define the remit, scope and collective objectives of the group. As well as preparation of the Management Plan, this should include the scope of the participation process, and the role of the group after the Plan is complete. It is useful to prepare and disseminate a statement, or 'mission', that embraces this remit.
- **Where are we now?** An early task should be to assemble and review the existing inputs to AONB management. This should include Statements of Intent, Issues Reports, current Management Plans, and other plans and strategies that are relevant to the area.
- **What else is going on?** It is important that the group is aware of any other parallel processes going on in the area. At a county and district level, for example, there may be initiatives relating to 'Best Value' consultations, community strategy development or development planning. Within the AONB other organisations may be conducting exercises such as Village Appraisals or preparing Habitat Action Plans. Constituent local authorities may be involved in management planning processes in other protected areas, including other AONBs. This involvement may offer opportunities for partnership members to increase the effectiveness of their contributions.

It may be possible to work jointly with colleagues involved in these initiatives, or it may be possible to use data they collect as an input to the AONB management planning process. It is particularly important to avoid participation/consultation fatigue and not to duplicate consultative processes which have already taken place.

- **Where should we start and where should we be when we finish?** The potential benefits of the proposed planning process need to be identified, against the strengths and weaknesses of other arrangements. For example, where good consultative bodies exist already they could be used. Even where a draft Plan already exists there are good reasons for starting planning as if from scratch, in order to generate the benefits of the process.
- **Who will do what?** An early decision needs to be made on who will lead the process, and how and when that person will report to

the steering group. The lead individual may be the AONB officer or equivalent, or it may be another designated person from within the partnership. Sub-groups/topic groups may be needed to address different subjects and may involve, or even be led by, people from outside the AONB partnership.

- **Consultants or in-house?** Carrying out the work in-house will take a lot of staff time, but means staff can bring a personal insight to the job and cement personal relationships with stakeholders. Staff also may feel they have greater ownership of the end product. Contracting an outside specialist costs money, but should bring a level of objectivity and specific areas of professional expertise (for example, of consensus building or presentation) which may not be available in-house. If outside help is employed it is important to specify precisely what is to be done through a detailed project brief. Advice should be sought from others before drawing up a list of those who will be invited to tender. Consider proposals carefully and do not necessarily go for the cheapest bid!

Outside specialists may be particularly valuable in the consultation phase where professional market research may prove an important input to the planning process. It should always be clear to everyone involved that consultants are working on behalf of the partnership, not in their own right. Sometimes it may be best to have the consultant working alongside a member of the AONB unit staff, with a clearly defined role, for example as ‘facilitator’.

- **How will we let people know what is going on?** A communication strategy is vital. There should be an identified point of reference for queries, but communication should also be proactive. For each stage in the planning process ways in which the outcome is to be communicated to participants and others should be specified.
- **Keep records.** Thank people, record responses, acknowledge inputs. The outcome of each stage of the process and who has been involved should also be recorded. A summary of the planning process may be a useful component of the final plan.
- **Timetable and budget.** Finally, the steering group should prepare an Action Plan for the planning process that includes a schedule of key events and a budget, and make arrangements for regular reviews of progress. At an early stage the impact of planning work on support staff, and on the ability of the AONB unit to work on other projects, should be assessed.

2.3. Participation and information

An effective management planning process that results in a Plan that is supported, respected and implemented by a wide range of organisations and the local community should include active participation of stakeholders from the very beginning. Participation is

not just consultation on policies and objectives. It is a dynamic and interactive process that identifies the major interests and concerns about the AONB and determines a set of mutually agreed objectives and priorities – by consensus.

With this approach the process can:

- Bring together a wide range of agencies and individuals, and create a common purpose and collective responsibility for the AONBs future.
- Seek to generate a consensus around a set of common aims based on a shared vision resulting in an agreed set of policies for AONB management.
- Engender a strong sense of ownership amongst organisations and individuals in the objectives of the Plan.

2.3.1. Who should be involved?

There are many organisations and individuals that have an interest in the management of an AONB and could potentially be involved in the planning process. The range, type and number of participants will depend on the size, character, issues and management pressures associated with the area. A 'key stakeholder analysis' will help to identify potential participants. This itself needs to be open and transparent, so that it results in a group that represents a broad cross-section of relevant organisations and local communities. Ideally such a group should include 'specific invitees' from relevant organisations in addition to people 'off the street' who are encouraged to participate by advertising events and activities.

Three groups of stakeholders should be represented:

- People with information or skills relevant to the Plan and its preparation.
- People affected by what happens as a consequence of the Plan.
- People with authority and/or resources to act in implementing the Plan.

Many stakeholders will fit into more than one of these categories. It may be useful early on to sketch out a 'participation strategy' which analyses who might make a valuable contribution, and how they might best be involved.

2.3.2. Participation methods

Many different methods can be used for community participation and consultation, from 'Planning for Real' workshops through simple round table discussion groups to telephone surveys and postal questionnaires. Information is available on a variety of methods including how to run public meetings, how to develop sense of value in an area, and on many practical activities that encourage people to participate and express their views (see Appendix 5, Useful publications on page 111).

Table 5 overleaf reviews a range of methods and summarises some of their advantages and disadvantages and the circumstances and points in the planning process at which they might be employed. The potential difficulties in carrying out these sorts of activities should not be underestimated. Nearly all of them require careful management and may benefit from the involvement of a skilled, independent facilitator.

Techniques selected should be appropriate to the circumstances of the AONB, to the participants involved, and to the outcomes required. For example, activities directed towards those who live and work in an area are likely to be very different from those directed at visitors or holidaymakers. Creative and innovative approaches are most likely to engage successfully with local communities. Participation workshops can include activities that start to get people thinking about the value of their area by celebrating local distinctiveness, and focus minds on issues and solutions. The aim should be to keep the profile of the AONB high in the minds of the community and of participating organisations throughout the process. It will normally be necessary to consider a variety of levels of promotion with special events for key groups (such as local authorities and land management organisations) to raise the profile of the process and to promote the importance of the plan.

Different methods can be used at different stages during the process. For example, it may be advantageous to start the process with a series of exhibitions and widely publicised events. These raise the profile of the AONB and capture the attention of the community. It may then be appropriate to run a series of 'round table' events to identify broad visions and local aspirations. A further stage may involve visioning of solutions that could lead to specific management policy objectives. This could involve topic groups and focus groups working on particular issues. Where these are established it is important that they do not consist just of specialists in a particular area. For example, agricultural policies should not be discussed only by farmers, nor access policy only by ramblers.

Table 5 Methods for consultation and participation

Method	Strength	Weakness	Comment
Open meetings	Cheap and easy to organise	Often contentious or dominated by particular groups of interests	Best for area issues, when organised by local representative bodies (e.g. parish councils)
Displays and exhibitions	Portable, effective ways of providing visual impact; good way of stimulating discussion	Messages may be ambiguous or personal	Best if produced by stakeholders themselves, otherwise likely to be seen as 'window-dressing'
Small group meetings, topic groups, focus groups	Focused and motivating, allowing consideration of particular issues in depth	Expensive in terms of officer time, need careful management and may duplicate other forums	Mixed groups useful for initial 'visioning' For subsequent consultation on draft plan use existing forums
School based exercises	Involves community through parents and teachers	May be seen as pre-empting democratic processes	Use in combination with other methods
'Planning for Real'	Highly participatory and focused	Can lead on to very broad debate, losing perspective and raising unrealistic expectations; does not work on an AONB-wide basis	Best for specific development issues
Face-to-face, questionnaires	Good for 'specialist research' with selected individuals	Take time, and ideally carried out by trained market researchers. Danger otherwise of yielding unrepresentative, anecdotal results	Best for initial research and/or final troubleshooting on particular topics
Telephone surveys and interviews	As above	As above	As above
Web based consultation	Accessible to many including those beyond the AONB boundary	Level of response likely to be low	Techniques range from simple questionnaires to more engaging interactive programmes
Postal questionnaires	Good for 'saturation consultation', providing everyone with the opportunity to respond	Costly; poor response rate, information of doubtful significance	Use with care, or where it is particularly important that consultation is seen to be taking place

Each stage should involve a broad cross section of stakeholders, including local authority members and officers, representatives of relevant organisations and interest groups and members of the community. This varied mix of participants encourages equality of involvement and helps to build a level of trust that is rare in more formal consultations.

Participation and consultation should be genuinely open, but beware of others hijacking the process for their own ends. The objective is to draw up an AONB Plan, so the agenda should focus on AONB priorities. The process should be used as an opportunity to educate people about the AONB. Be clear about the partnership's roles and powers, aiming to raise aspirations (but not necessarily expectations) amongst stakeholders. In particular it may be useful to agree key indicators of success as part of the participation process. This means everyone will be clear about what the plan is trying to achieve (see Section 4.2.2 Monitoring condition on page 64).

It is important that each stage in the consultation be recorded in detail and reported fully, both to those who participated in them, and to the larger community.

Example 6 The Kent Downs Jigsaw Project

The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Assessment was completed in 1995. It was agreed that the next step was to raise public awareness of the AONB and to involve local people in developing management policies. The AONB covers 128 parishes. The Jigsaw Project was launched in March 1996, with an invitation to each of these to nominate a 'jigsaw co-ordinator', each of whom was sent an information pack and a simple questionnaire asking about perceptions of the local countryside. Films were included with process paid envelopes, for people to record what they felt was distinctive about their locality – eyesores and problems as well as the loved and attractive features. In some cases only a few people were


involved, sometimes just one keen photographer. In others, there was wide participation, with photographs displayed in shops, pubs, libraries and at fetes, and with people invited to vote on which photos they felt embodied the character of the area. In the autumn, a series of workshops were held, where each participant mounted and captioned a set of prints, resulting in more than 800 A3 'parish pages' resulting in a complex compound photographic snapshot of the Downs that year. Parish coordinators were also invited to make a photomontage to the outline of their parish, using a second set of prints. These were then assembled into a jigsaw which was subsequently made available to all parishes in the AONB for display at village events. The whole process generated interest and involvement with a wider consultation process feeding into the draft Management Strategy for the AONB.

Example 7

In 1992 a fieldworker was employed to draw up an Issues Report for the AONB. Based on interviews and meetings in 4 of the Blackdown parishes the report entitled; "it's a living landscape, not a picture" was generally well received.

In developing an AONB Management Strategy the Blackdown Hills JAC was keen to take community involvement a stage further. By opting for an extensive community consultation approach the JAC hoped to:

- ✎ Increase understanding about local concerns and aspirations
- ✎ Make the Strategy address local priorities
- ✎ Raise awareness of and support for the AONB designation
- ✎ Add status and weight to Strategy recommendations
- ✎ Build community identity and commitment to local action



The Blackdown Hills AONB was the location of a high profile consultation exercise in which a variety of techniques were used.

This began with a series of village meetings each of which started with a 'blank sheet of paper' and was aimed at encouraging local residents to record their concerns and aspirations. These meetings were followed by a day conference which identified key themes for further exploration. A third stage included a series of focused 'topic groups' which produced recommendations on: agriculture and the environment; community needs; planning and development; and access and movement. The outcome of these were incorporated into a draft Management Strategy. This was released for a three month consultation period culminating in a second day conference, following which amendments were incorporated by the JAC into a final Plan. The process of local consultation is ongoing and includes an annual conference at which the implementation of the Plan is reviewed.

2.3.3. Documentary inputs, data and research

A wide range of documents need to be taken account of in drawing up the Plan. If there is a previous or existing Management Plan this is likely to provide the starting point. Otherwise a Statement of Intent or similar document is likely to exist but neither should limit the eventual policies contained in the Plan. All AONBs have a landscape assessment (usually published by the Countryside Agency) which will form the basis for specifying what features of the AONB merit special protection (albeit without devaluing any other part of the Area) and highlight issues or 'forces for change' upon the landscape. A landscape assessment should be regarded as a potentially powerful tool which can be used, for example, as a starting point in consultation exercises, and as a tool for prioritising and targeting. A landscape assessment may need to be critically reviewed in the light of the Countryside Agency's 'Landscape Character Assessment Guidance'⁹. It may be necessary to commission a new Landscape Character Assessment as part of the management planning process, or this may be one of the actions identified within the Management Plan.

9. Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, 2001, published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Many AONBs have subject/thematic plans or guidelines (e.g. on nature conservation, woodland management, transport or tourism) which will provide a first indication of key policy areas the plan needs to address. In addition there may be an 'Issues Report' or similar document which will provide a more rounded overview of other factors which need to be considered during the planning process.

In addition to these documents relating specifically to the AONB there will be a wide range of other plans and strategies, ranging from statutory development plans to individual site management plans (see Section 1.3. Relation of AONB Management Plans to other plans and policies on page 22). Information collected through the process of developing a community strategy (which local authorities are required to produce under the Local Government Act 2000) may be particularly valuable. Quantitative data can be of value in a number of different ways:

- As an input to the management planning process, for example, as an element of a comprehensive description of landscape character, to assess the level and nature of recreational use, or to evaluate the social and economic character and needs of local communities.
- As a component of the Plan in the form of statistics, tables or inset maps (to supplement the description of the AONB or to provide a rationale given for policies).
- To aid the implementation of the Plan (e.g. to facilitate integration or relation to development plans, or to meet the needs of AONB partners).
- As an output from the Plan (e.g. in its own right, or as an input to AONB promotional and interpretative literature).
- For monitoring and review, to 'complete the loop' of the planning process (to understand how the landscape is being conserved or enhanced, how its enjoyment by the public has been secured, or how the social and economic well being of local communities has been furthered).

2.3.4. Analysis

Information arising from participation activities and extracted from relevant publications and other documents should be kept carefully, probably in a central location. Results of participation exercises and of responses to consultation procedures need to be summarised as objectively as possible, with numerical analysis where this is appropriate. Examination of these and of other sources of information will enable the production of:

- A list of AONB issues (i.e. of topics or themes which are seen as contentious or problematic) which need to be addressed in the draft Plan.
- A provisional list of headings or sections under which AONB policies can be presented (note that this will be related to but is unlikely to be the same as the list of issues).

At this stage outline policy options are likely to emerge. Some objectives (see Section 3 on page 43) are likely to be relatively uncontentious, on others there is likely to be disagreement, and perhaps irreconcilable views. Even where there is a consensus about policy objectives, there may be different ways of achieving these. Sometimes different objectives may be appropriate to different parts of the AONB and different methods may be appropriate to different partners or stakeholders.

Different policies (objectives or methods) may be in conflict with each other, or they may be complementary. The use of techniques such as a compatability matrix may be a useful way of analysing or displaying these interactions. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) techniques may also be useful in analysing. A major task for the steering group will be to decide how differences of opinion over appropriate policies for the AONB or conflicts between policies are to be dealt with and presented in the draft Plan. In order to do this it may be appropriate to call a meeting of the AONB partnership. Often several meetings may be required, with members of the steering committee liaising with stakeholder groups between times, in order to resolve difficult issues.

2.4. Drafting

The outcome of the participation, consultation and information gathering exercise should be an agreed vision for the AONB together with a set of policy objectives for its management which address most if not all of the issues that have been identified. These should be assembled into the first draft Plan which should include a summary of the participation process and who has been involved.

Example 8

The draft Plan is a public document which should be circulated as widely as possible.



It is probably wise at this stage not to go into too much detail on management methods, particularly where these involve an obligation to action on the part of other AONB partners. Broad agreement on policies can make it easier subsequently to achieve agreement on the actions that are required to implement them. Preliminary technical material including a description of the AONB that may need to be included in the final document can also be omitted at this stage, although as a minimum a summary of this information may help people who have not been involved in plan production.

2.5. Getting feedback on the draft Plan

As with the final Plan, it may be appropriate to produce a summary of the draft Plan which can be circulated as widely as necessary without incurring huge cost. The first draft (or its summary) should be distributed to all the organisations and individuals that have been involved in the first stage of the process, plus any other organisations that may have an interest in the area (the list presented in Section 1.2.4 Who is the Plan for? on page 19 can be used as a starting point). This offers everyone the opportunity to comment on the results of participation and on the vision for the AONB and the proposed management policies that have emerged.

It is particularly important to invite comments in a formal way from key stakeholders and public bodies. These organisations (for example, EA, DEFRA, NFU, different departments within constituent local authorities) will usually want to circulate drafts internally, and may require at least six weeks to respond to a consultation request. Bodies like parish councils, which sometimes meet only on a quarterly basis, may take up to three months to respond to a consultation draft.

Some AONB partnerships send a copy of the summary document to every household in the AONB, often with a reply paid questionnaire or comments sheet.

When it is expected that there will be a substantial response to a request for feedback careful thought should be given to the way in which information will be analysed. A structured questionnaire helps the process of organising and quantifying feedback received.

At this stage it may help to consider particular sections of the draft Plan in topic groups or area-based working groups. It is important, wherever possible, to use existing forums rather than to create them especially for the purposes of management planning. For example, it is better to put discussion of the draft plan on the agenda of existing Local Access Forums or agriculture working groups. This will reduce costs, avoid duplication and help to avoid 'consultation fatigue'. It also means that such standing committees will have 'ownership' of the Plan and may be more likely to assist in the implementation of its policies.

There is no formal deposit or approval process for AONB Management Plans, but local authorities in England proposing to adopt, review or publish such a Plan must give due notice to the Countryside Agency and to English Nature and must take any observations made into account. Conservation boards must in addition copy their draft Plans to all relevant local authorities.

2.6. The published Plan

The responses to the consultation on the draft Plan will form the basis of the published Plan. Care should be taken to include further information, or make amendments, that reflect opinions consistent with those identified during the earlier participation exercises and that are agreed by all members of the AONB partnership. Major changes suggested by a few respondents will compromise the integrity of the earlier phases. There is also a danger of diluting policies and actions as a response to conflicting opinions and this should be avoided wherever possible. It is important to avoid 'dumbing down' policies in order to make them acceptable to particular groups. Contentious areas which have proved intractable to resolution may be left open, provided that the way in which they are to be addressed in the future is stated.

Particularly important will be the CRoW Act clauses that require the comments of English Nature and the Countryside Agency to be taken into account before the published Plan goes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In the case of conservation boards, the comments of local authorities will also need to be formally sought and incorporated. In practice, this would be carried out during the preparation of the Plan. However, more formal arrangements will need to be set up to cover the CRoW Act clauses.

Adoption, promotion and implementation

Once complete, the Plan can be adopted by the AONB partnership, and by the partnership's other member organisations. It will also need to be formally adopted by the local authorities involved to fulfil their statutory duty under CRoW. This process of adoption needs to be time-tabled carefully to fit in with the committee cycles of the different organisations involved. A copy of the Plan must be submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, but will not be formally adopted or approved by the Secretary of State.

Once adopted, the Management Plan can then be launched and promoted to the community and beyond. A high profile launch involving the participants from the planning process and other relevant organisations and interest groups will help to raise awareness of the Plan and its objectives. It will also pave the way for implementation which, if possible, should include elements which can begin immediately (see Section 4 on page 60).

3. The product – contents of an AONB Management Plan

There is no ‘ideal’ format, structure or content of an AONB Plan. These need to be tailored to the needs of the AONB and to the functions intended for the Plan, which will go well beyond the roles of just the AONB unit.

This section of the guide:

- Outlines general principles which will help guide decisions on plan content.
- Presents a generic plan format which can be used as a template to suit individual circumstances.
- Discusses some of the topics which may need to be addressed in the Plan.
- Considers how the Plan may best be presented and produced.

3.1. General principles

The structure, presentation and content of the Management Plan will be influenced by the priority given to different plan purposes (see Section 1.2.3 Why plan? on page 18). CRoW requires that an AONB Management Plan must contain policies for management of the area and information on how the local authorities or conservation board (in practice, the AONB partnership) intend to carry out their function in relation to the AONB. An effective Plan will always exceed this minimum statutory requirement, and should be presented in a way that emphasises the multiple inputs that are required if Plan objectives are to be achieved. The roles of the AONB partnership and the AONB unit do not need to be presented separately from the roles of other partners.

3.1.1. Integration

The following questions need to be considered before the first draft is produced:

- **Who will read it?** This will determine issues such as its length, style and presentation, the number of copies to be produced, and the unit cost.
- **Will there be a separate summary plan?** If so the two documents can address different audiences and play different functions. The summary plan can be designed for public information and for promotional purposes whilst the main plan can be the policy and working document for AONB partners.
- **Will there be a separate Action Plan?** Experience suggests this usually works well. It means that the main (Strategy) Plan can present the context and analysis, and the AONB policies, while the Action Plan can focus on the tasks and outputs expected of each partner, and can be more frequently updated.

- **Should there be appendices?** A good deal of complex material might be considered essential to a full Plan but could make it unwieldy and difficult to read. By putting technical and descriptive material in an appendix (which can be separate from the bound plan) the main Plan can be a much shorter and more accessible document which can focus on the AONB vision and policies.

Information must be presented in a clear and logical manner and in language that is easily understood by all readers. It is also important not to make assumptions or take for granted the level of existing knowledge of the reader: one approach is to assume the reader is intelligent but ignorant. Policies, objectives and actions should be supported by reasoned justifications and presented logically. Presenting policies without such justification may weaken them in the eyes of some readers, and as a result they might be dropped when the plan is revised. A paragraph or section coding system can be used to relate plan issues, policies and actions together. Coding should always be as simple as possible, or else its impact is diminished.

It is quite likely only a few people will ever read an AONB Management Plan from cover to cover. Most will scan through looking for elements that are of particular interest to them, and then focus on just a few pages. This means that:

- The structure of the Plan should be simple and clearly signposted.
- Each section should stand alone (albeit cross-referenced to other relevant sections). This inevitably means that there will be a certain amount of repetition within the Plan.

3.1.2. Presentation

It is easy to end up producing a dry document which may come over as soulless and formulaic. Consideration should be given to using a professional author to write, or edit, the final version so it reads well. It can also be countered by attractive presentation, and by stimulating the reader's interest in the beauty and wonder of the AONB itself. It may be helpful to include photographs of landscapes or people, and extracts from literary or artistic works relating to the area, to help bring the plan's policies to life.

Every AONB Plan needs to address the AONB from a number of very different perspectives. One difficult decision in presenting the plan is to work out how to categorise these different topics. Some need to be identified as main subject heads, others will be cross cutting themes. All will relate in some way to each other. A final decision about this will be informed by the participation process, and also by consideration of how best the Plan can influence key partners.

Management topics can be handled in two broad ways:

1. Encapsulate the whole AONB and all topics within the planning sequence (i.e. main sections in the plan might be description, vision, policies etc.).

2. Have separate chapters for each main topic, for example landscape, local community issues and access to the countryside (each section includes sub-sections on description, issues, policies etc.).

Most AONB planners have gone for option 2, or a variation on it, as outlined in Section 3.3 Common themes in AONB Management Plans on page 49. Whatever approach is adopted there must be coherence across the whole Plan - ensuring that the end product is not a dozen separate Plans bound together in a single document.

Careful consideration should be given as to whether the policies expressed in the plan should be zoned. Zoning may enable particular suites of policies may be 'tailored' to specific areas of the AONB. However it may also undermine the coherence of the AONB, and care should be taken that zoning is done in a way that enhances rather than undermines unity and consistency. Particularly where the AONB covers several different planning authority areas it is important to make sure that zones do not simply reinforce the differences between the policies of constituent local authorities. Zoning based on Countryside Character Areas, reflecting tangible differences visible on the ground, is normally to be preferred.

In general, zoning is less of a feature in AONB Plans than it is with other plans which relate to a single planning authority (e.g. National Park Plans). Even when a Plan does use geographical zones to help clarify where different policies apply, zonation should always be subsidiary to the key thematic topics addressed by the Plan.

Example 9

Policies in the Gower AONB Plan are zoned, but as the area is under one local authority, this does not undermine the coherence of the AONB as it might in other AONBs which fall within several different local authorities.

3.2. Elements within a Plan

3.2.1. Contents

A full AONB Management Plan should contain the following elements. They may be presented in a different order, or some elements might be contained within others, or split up and dealt with thematically in different sections of the document.

- **Introductory statement.** This will set the context for the AONB and its Management Plan in a forward looking and positive way, and explain why the Plan has been produced.
- A **Description** of the AONB and an **Assessment** of its significance and special qualities. Information about the area itself should stress aspects that give unity to the AONB as a whole, while also identifying individual features or distinct zones within the AONB. In addition, the Plan should present background on the AONB as a legal entity, including for example the history rationale for its designation and an explanation of its current administrative arrangements. Detailed information about membership of the AONB partnership and staffing of the AONB unit is probably best included in the appendices (see below). This prevents people viewing the Plan as something that only concerns the AONB partnership and unit.

Mention should be made of all the major aspects of interest, covering both natural and cultural topics. However the description section of an AONB Management Plan should not go into enormous detail on any one aspect of the AONB. It is better to present a brief summary of key points, and to tell the reader where more detailed information can be found (for example, in a published landscape assessment or in a separate topic plan).

While much of the description will be factual some elements may be quite subjective. Indicate the basis for such subjective opinions, ideally referring to other documents or authorities.

High quality information about AONBs is not always available (see Appendix 3 on page 91). Much of the information about AONBs may be fragmentary or inconsistent, and Management Plans should acknowledge any significant data shortfalls. Making good these shortfalls might be identified as a priority action within the Plan itself.

- **Principal issues** in the AONB. These will include current threats, trends and pressures which are impacting on the special qualities identified above. It may be easiest to tackle this section by considering a range of topics, and any issues related to AONB designation. Mention will need to be made of broader government policies and other legislative context. It is important to distinguish clearly between factors which the AONB partnerships must accept as ‘givens’, and factors which the partnership (or constituent partners) can control, or seek to influence.
- A report of the **participative process** used to produce the Plan, and a summary of the main findings. This summary should bring out the ‘flavour’ of the responses and describe how it has influenced the development of the Plan.

The methods used for the process and the nature of the information gathered will help to determine the structure of the document. If, for example, rural economy and development issues were emphasised repeatedly and consistently in the participation stages these should be addressed by specific policies. They might be allocated their own sections in the Plan, or should be emphasised specifically in other relevant sections.

- A **Vision** for the AONB’s future, in terms that are likely to secure the commitment and/or arouse the curiosity of the reader. The vision should be specific to the AONB, not so general that it could be applied to almost any protected landscape. This vision should be memorable, framed in ‘plain English’, and preferably stated in as few words as possible. This is a long term view of where the AONB is going, typically looking forward 20-40 years.
- **Policies for the AONB.** These will generally be presented in the form of measurable objectives which will relate to the previous

assessment of the AONB and to the different issues raised, and which, if achieved, will move the AONB towards the stated vision. Policies will normally include a statement of the methods by which the objectives will be addressed. Often there will be a number of different ways of achieving any objective, and this needs to be made clear (see Section 2.3.4 Analysis on page 39).

- **Tasks** that need to be undertaken to achieve the objectives. These will form the Action Plan, sometimes presented in the form of a table stating what needs to be done, by whom, and to what timescale.
- **Bibliography.** A list of all the documents and other plans referred to in producing the Plan (see Section 2.3.3 on page 38).
- **Appendices.** These should contain information considered essential to the plan, but which might clutter the main text. They may be presented separately from the main Plan.

Consider including:

- * Details of the AONB partnership: organisations who are part of the partnership and names and positions of their representatives
- * Acknowledgement of all individuals and organisations who contributed to Plan production.

Generally the Plan should not be cluttered up with detail from other plans, for example clauses from the legislation, quotes from Local Biodiversity Action Plans or specific policies from Regional Planning Guidance. If these are included - because it is felt they might give added authority to the Plan's policies - then these too should be in the appendices, not in the main text.

3.2.2 Information

In addition to the above, every plan needs:

- **A title.** This could just be "Management Plan for the Misty Mountains Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty", or it could be something more punchy. The Cotswolds AONB Plan in 1996 was entitled "A Future Challenge", with the formal title as a sub-heading
- **Dates.** Date of Plan publication, and period covered by the Plan.
- **A map** showing the boundaries of the AONB, within a regional or sub-regional context (see further comment on maps in Section 3.41 Design matters on page 56).
- **Contact details** for the AONB unit, including phone, email and website information. This should be presented in a way that makes it clear that feedback and requests for further information will be welcomed.

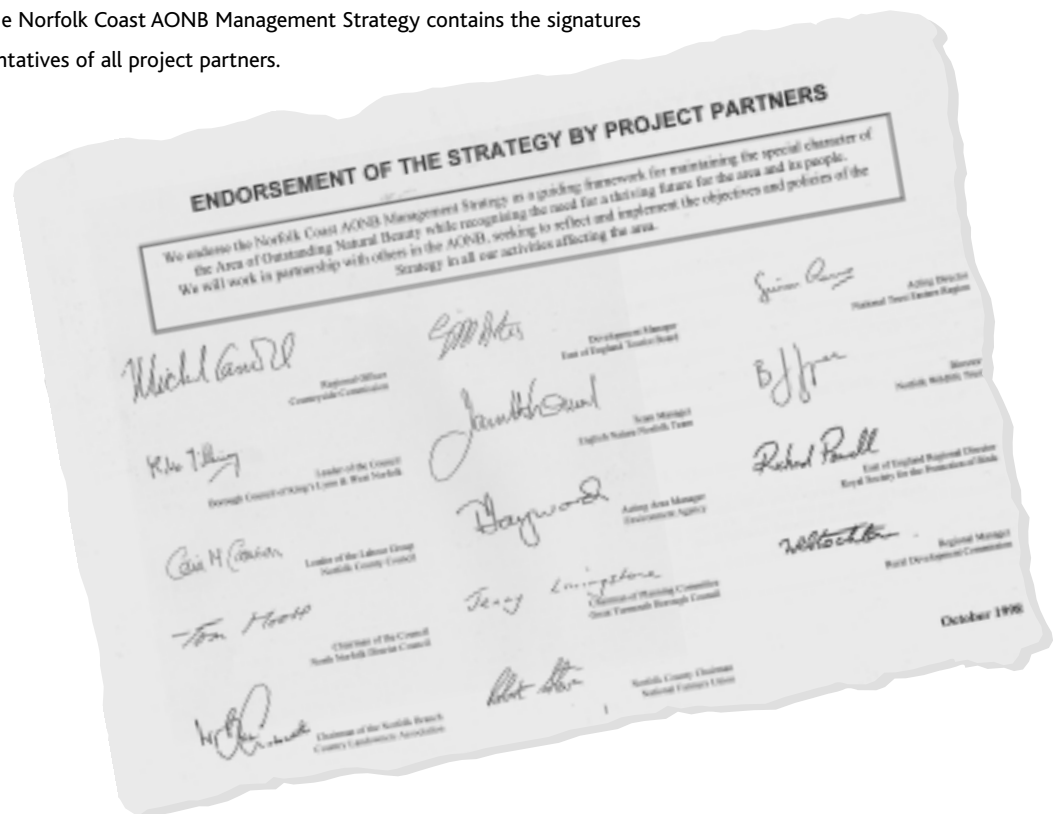
Example 10

The contents page of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Management Strategy is a clear guide to its structure and content.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword	3
Part One	
Introduction	5
Background	6
Environmental context	7
Cultural context	8
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Structure of the Strategy	13
NAPs: Strategy area & administrative boundaries	15
Parishes in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths	17
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The Natural World vision	19
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Appendix 2 – Strategy development Log & timetable	68

Example 11

The inside cover of the Norfolk Coast AONB Management Strategy contains the signatures of prominent representatives of all project partners.



- **Endorsements.** The status of the final version of the Plan should be clearly stated. If endorsement is given by other organisations and groups, in addition to members of the AONB partnership, this may increase the influence of the Plan. Local politics and the size of the partnership will determine whether it is helpful to include photographs of the Chairs of critical groups, or the logos of key partner organisations.
- **A table of contents,** possibly supported also by an index. Modern word processing software means that both of these can be produced very quickly.
- **Copyright conditions,** or perhaps a statement along the lines of ‘this publication or any section of it may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The source of the material must be acknowledged’.

3.3. Common themes in AONB Management Plans

Management policies developed in the Plan will need to address all of the key issues identified during the consultation process. These should of course be linked to the purpose of the AONB designation, to conserve and enhance natural beauty. There is therefore likely to be a degree of commonality between AONBs, reflecting their shared status and goals. The relative emphasis given to different topics depends entirely on local circumstances, and the level of detail may reflect how well the topic is dealt with elsewhere. For example, if all the constituent local authorities of an AONB have recently produced statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plans which identifies action pertinent to and for the AONB then the AONB Management Plan may not need to devote much space to this topic. It is likely that every Plan will encompass most, if not all, of the following topics.

- Landscape quality.
- Landscape character and local distinctiveness.
- Natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Archaeology and historic landscapes.
- Agriculture.
- Forestry.
- Local communities and cultural activities.
- Local economy and employment.
- Housing and the built environment.
- Transport and traffic.
- Mineral extraction.
- Other development issues, for example radio masts, wind farms and waste disposal.
- Military use.

- Water cycle and coastal management.
- Tourism, recreation and active sports.
- Marketing and promotion of the AONB.
- Rights of Way.
- Access to the countryside.

These topics can be treated individually or lumped together into fewer sections in the AONB Plan, as an alternative to the more unitary plan structure presented above (in Section 3.2.1 Contents on page 45). Each topic section might then cover the phases described for the whole plan i.e. ideally containing the following information:

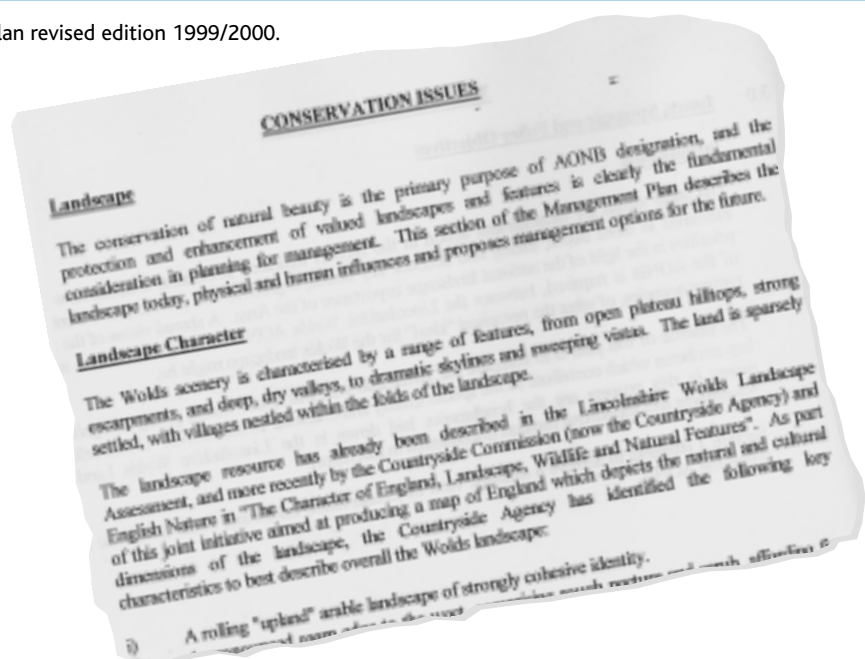
- Contextual information.
- Key issues.
- What the participative process revealed about the topic – an insight into stakeholders' views.
- Long term management aims, identifying a 'desired state' for the topic with justifications.
- Policies, linking shorter term objectives to relevant actions.
- Priorities for action.
- Key indicators.

Sometimes separate topic or sectoral sub-plans will be needed to deal with the topic in adequate depth (see Section 1.3.3 Other AONB policies and documents on page 27).

The examples on the next few pages demonstrate a range of approaches taken when dealing with these topics.

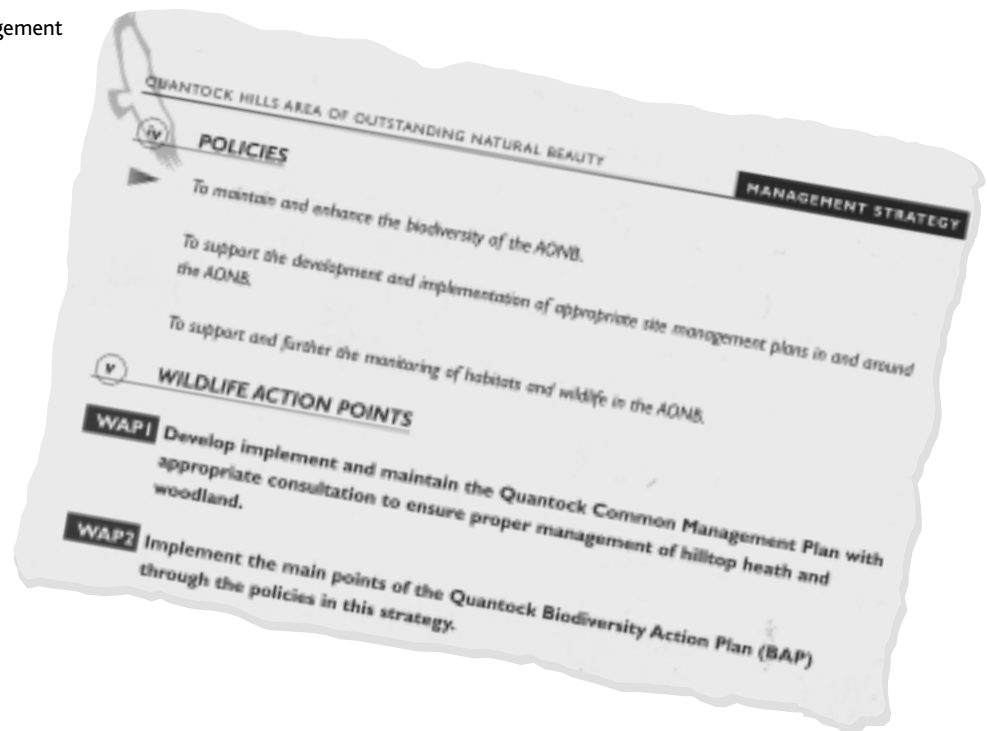
Example 12 Landscape

Lincolnshire Wolds AONB Management Plan revised edition 1999/2000.



Example 13 Wildlife

Quantock Hills AONB Management Strategy (1999).



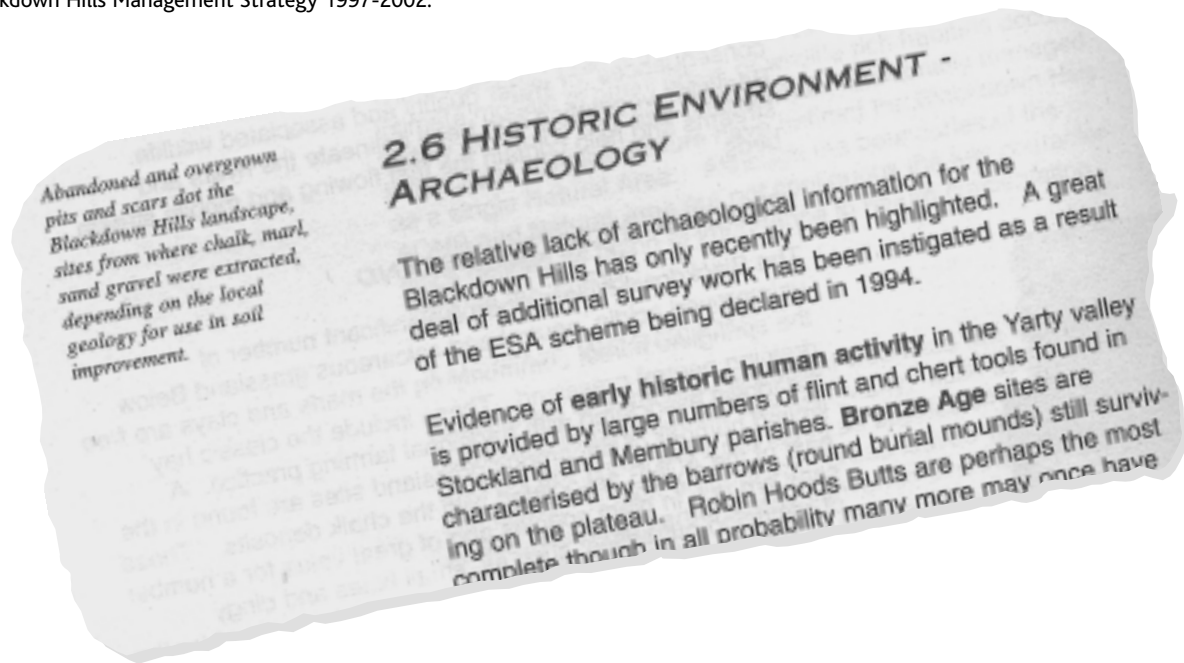
Example 14 Agriculture

Surrey Hills AONB Management Strategy, May 2000.



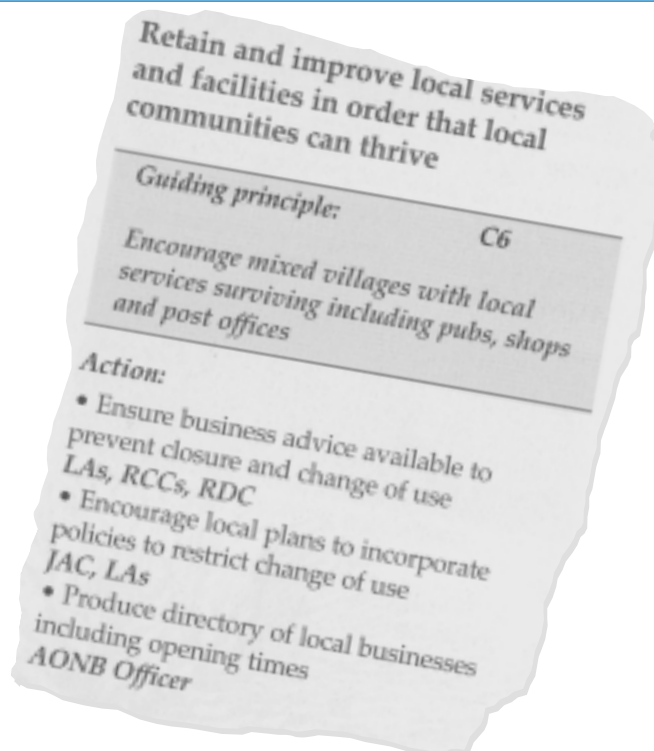
Example 15 Archaeology

Blackdown Hills Management Strategy 1997-2002.



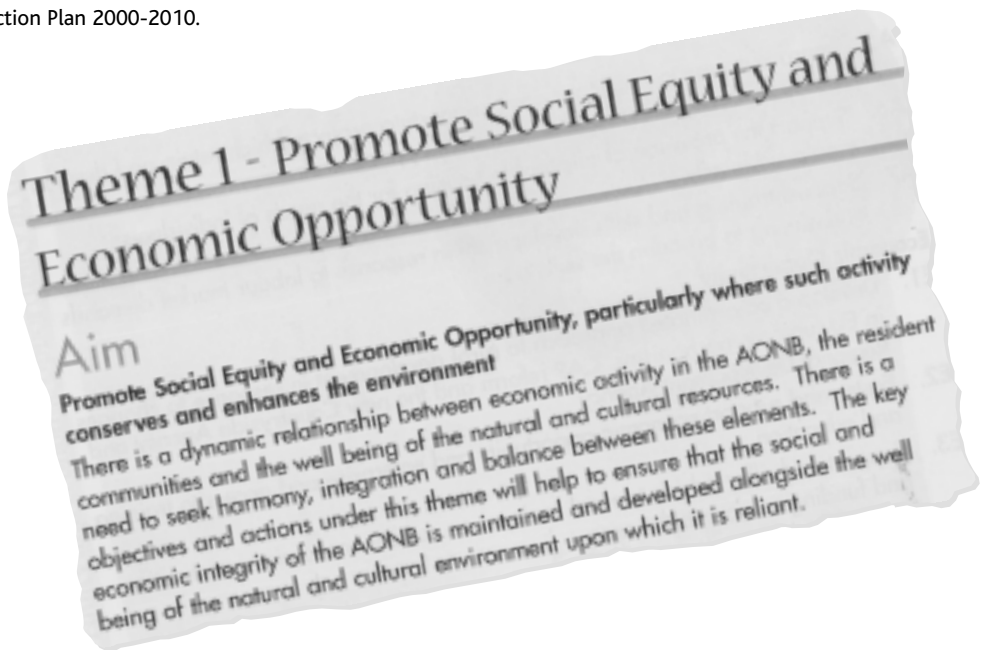
Example 16 Community

Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan, March 1998.



Example 17 Supporting the local economy

Forest of Bowland AONB Action Plan 2000-2010.



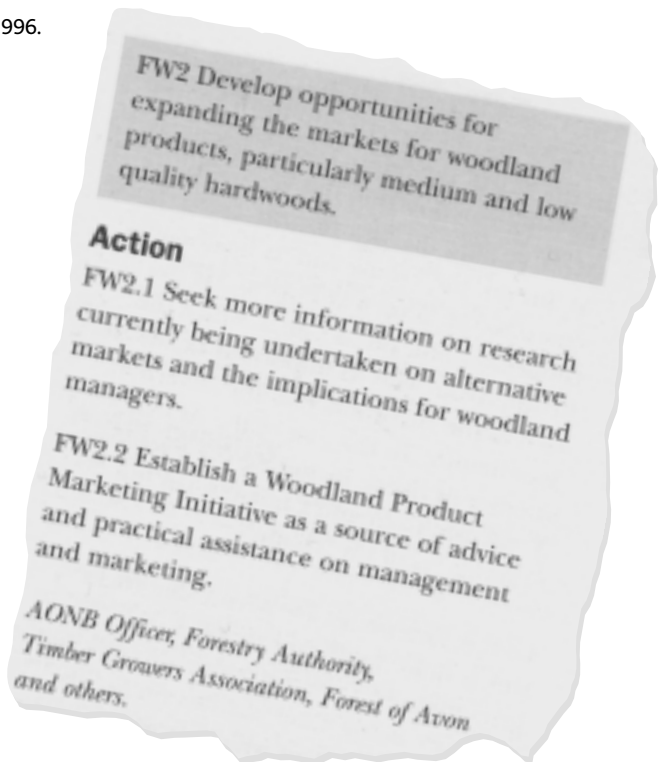
Example 18 Promoting local products

The High Weald AONB Unit produces a range of material promoting local produce including wood products and foodstuffs for which a 'brand image' (and premium prices) are sought. This is a good example of the way an AONB partnership can reinforce positive links between environmental management and economic development in a tangible way.



Example 19 Forestry

'A Future Challenge' – Cotswolds AONB Management Strategy 1996.



Example 20 Transport

residents, who may be able to sustain such services in the off-season. Such modifications could include:

- the integration of support for **school, college, and general service buses**. This is to occur for 1998, allowing an expanded Coastliner service to provide winter and commuter services. This is to be achieved through a substantial increase in County Council expenditure, but should in turn increase the revenue from fares, as the service becomes more useful to residents.

The sail boats between Marazion and Hillyer Point - a form of "Rock W' Roll"

- a planned utilisation of local **Community Transport** and **taxi services** to feed potential customers to the bus. Negotiations would be required with relevant voluntary agencies and the taxi trade.
- the identification of **safe walk and cycle routes** to bus stops.
- Norfolk Structure Plan Review policy includes 'encouraging public transport operators to convey cycles'. This is occurring with success within the Bittern Line Partnership.

The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy was produced in 1998, the same year as the Norfolk Coast AONB Management Strategy.

Example 21 Water cycle management

The Mendip Hills AONB Management Plan includes policies relating to catchment management and aquifer pollution.

Guiding principle: C3

Recognise that information and communication is a key to success of managing the AONB
[See also REC9 & REC 10 - pages 27 & 28]

Action:

- Use local shop/village hall/pub for holding information eg Priddy shop at Mendip Heights
Wardens, PCs
- Identify local person in each village to act as communicator/contact point
AONB Officer, PC & Communicator
- Investigate setting up of JAC newsletter
JAC to investigate need

Guiding principle: C4

Parish Councils should be seen as the main channel of communication to keep local people informed and feed views on AONB issues back to the JAC

Action:

- Encourage PCs to work more closely with JAC
PCs & Communicators/Association of PC representatives
- Use village/PC newsletters for disseminating information
AONB Officer to produce standardised information
[See also CI]

Example 22 Tourism

The Purbeck Heritage Area (much of which is included in the Dorset AONB) contains policies for tourism management.

3.5 THE WAY FORWARD

Tourism: Aim and Objectives

The overall aim is to encourage a viable tourism industry appropriate to the special qualities of Purbeck.

To alleviate the problems outlined above and achieve the overall aim, the following key objectives have been identified which reflect the "Principles for Tourism in the Countryside" set out in paragraph 3.1.2:

- (1) To encourage staying visitors in ways which provide local income and respect the area's special qualities, by preparing a Tourism Marketing Plan for Purbeck and co-ordinating and improving the marketing of the area,
- (2) To regenerate the environment and economy of Swanage,
- (3) To improve car parking, pedestrian access and interpretation in Corfe Castle,
- (4) To regenerate the environment and economy of Wareham,
- (5) To support the improvement of Lulworth Cove and surrounding area,
- (6) To conserve the Studland Peninsula and southern shores of Poole Harbour,
- (7) To increase opportunities for leisure and recreation.

3.6 PROPOSALS

Key Proposal to Encourage Appropriate and Viable Tourism

TOU 1: The Purbeck Heritage Committee will encourage the preparation of an area-wide marketing plan aimed at encouraging staying visitors and managing day visitors which respects the special environmental qualities of Purbeck. This plan involves conducting a marketing audit in order to exploit the strengths and opportunities of the area, identify target markets and formulating a strategy for future marketing activities. This should address the following issues:

The economic benefits of tourism,

The environmental impact of tourism (e.g. increasing off peak tourism could have an adverse effect on vegetation or increase disturbance),

Education and training for providers,

Image and promotion,

Example 23 Collage of covers and pullouts of actual Plans

First impressions of the Plan are important. This is true both for the consultation draft as well as the final Plan. Content and design are interdependent, so the broad features of a design should be determined at the same time as decisions are made about Plan content. It is important that these decisions are made in the light of the intended readership and functions of the Plan.



3.4. Format and presentation

3.4.1. Design matters

AONB partnerships will almost certainly want to employ the services of a professional designer, at least to advise on layout, if not to contribute to the entire production process. Designers can only be as good as the brief they are given, and so authors need to explain carefully what they hope to achieve with the Plan, in terms of impression and readability. Avoid trying to do the designer's job for them, by specifying too precisely what the finished product will look like. The following advice is intended to indicate the range of issues that need to be discussed with the designer, particularly for those unused to producing this type of document.

Issues to be considered include:

- **Format:** A4 is universally popular because experience has proved it to be convenient in many situations - in the field, in a briefcase, at a meeting, or reading on a train. In book form, portrait format also tends to be favoured, although many Action Plans in particular are produced in landscape format allowing a number of columns (covering actions, date, by whom, code etc.) to be easily accommodated.
- **Font size:** Very small fonts make life difficult for people whose eyesight is less than perfect, and make the Plan more intimidating to many readers. 11 pt is to be favoured for the main text, and certainly no smaller than 10 pt. A hierarchy of font sizes should be used for chapter headings, sub-headings, and for captions to photographs or figures.
- **Columns and white space:** Two columns per page (or three if using landscape format) increase readability, and one wide margin (possibly used for headings, signposts or callouts) may also make the plan more attractive.
- **Colour:** Full colour throughout may be prohibitively expensive, although this may be seen justified expenditure. It could be adopted at least for the cover and perhaps some internal pages. Other pages could be just black and one colour which can be used at a range of tones. If you expect people to photocopy parts of the plan, or download it from your website and then print it out perhaps in black and white (see Appendix 4 on page 104), then ensure that all text is in black.
- **Maps:** A great deal of information can be summarised on well presented maps, and they can also convey a sense of place very effectively. Maps can show:
 - AONB boundaries.
 - The AONB in a regional context.
 - Landscape Character Areas.
 - Historical Landscape Assessment.
 - Designated nature conservation sites.
 - Historical and archaeological sites.
 - Physical attributes e.g. topography, geology, geomorphology, rivers and lakes.
 - Countryside recreation sites, e.g. country parks, picnic sites, access land.
 - Public Rights of Way and permissive paths, including National Trails, national cycle network and other long distance routes.

All maps are copyright and the permission of the copyright holder is required to reproduce them. Many local authorities will have a licence allowing them to copy Ordnance Survey maps. The owner of the copyright should be clearly indicated on the map.

- **Photographs and line drawings:** These will add greatly to the overall impression of the Plan, and can be used as a vehicle to sell what is special about the AONB.
- **Pullouts and pockets:** These are useful ways of getting round the limitations of adopting an A4 format. A3 pullouts are particularly useful for maps, actions plans or summary tables. A pocket may be useful for documents which will need to be updated, for example an annual Action Plan.
- **Publication on the Internet:** This can be a cheap way to make the Plan accessible to many people. It does however have design implications, for example the use of columns means that readers will constantly have to scroll up and down the screen if they don't want to print off a copy. Appendix 4 Information technology in AONB management on page 104 provides further information.

Budget considerations will quickly come to the fore when considering design and printing options, and the quality of the product obtained tends to reflect how much money is allocated to the job. When budgeting for this element of Plan production costs of design/editing, illustration and photography, as well as printing, should be taken into account.

Finally never underestimate the importance, and time required, for thorough proof-reading.

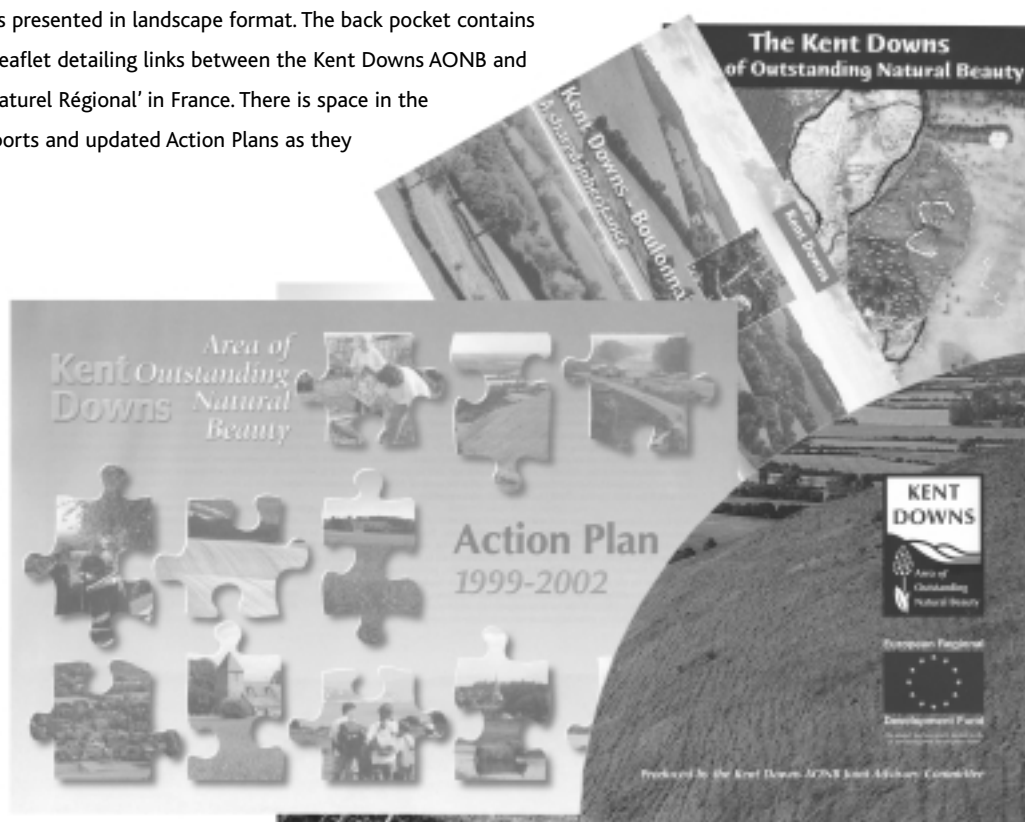
Example 24 Example of an Action Plan cheaply produced as stapled photocopy

The Norfolk Coast annual Action Plan is stapled and photocopied card and paper which can be produced each year at very little cost.

NORFOLK COAST AONB ACTION PLAN			April 1998 to March 1999
2.4 THE CHANGING COAST			
AONB OBJECTIVE 4 is: To allow evolution of the coastline through natural coastal processes, balanced with the need to protect people and property, maintain important wildlife species and habitats and maintain landscape character of the coast.			
Policies: the Project Partners will seek to:	Existing mechanisms	Actions	
Policy 15 Continue to improve knowledge and understanding of coastal processes and other factors affecting coastal change and use this to promote prudent management of natural resources and design coastline management schemes which work with these dynamic processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs, DCOs) Shoreline monitoring programmes (SAs, DCOs) Sea defence surveys (SAs, DCOs) University research projects Consultants reports forming part of capital works investigations (SAs) Anglian Coastal Authorities Group meetings (SAs, DCOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SMPs at agreed frequencies (SAs, DCOs) Maximise use of local knowledge of coastal change in specific schemes (SAs, DCOs, PCAs) 	
Policy 16 Continue development of a collaborative approach in the development of coastal management proposals, involving all relevant interests, particularly the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with local communities in development of schemes e.g. Stancaister and Clay-Kelling (SAs, DCOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use and develop existing partnerships to completion of current schemes (SAs, DCOs, PCAs) Develop new partnerships where appropriate, using experience gained in previous schemes, for new coastline management schemes (SAs, DCOs, PCAs, DCOs) 	
Policy 17 Promote and implement coastal management schemes and operations which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain landscape character and minimise the visual intrusion of any new structures retain and improve where appropriate public access and recreation opportunities conserve archaeological and built heritage features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Assessments / Appraisals as part of coastline management operations (SAs, DCOs) MAFF guidelines for preparation of capital schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and improve existing framework for consultation/liaison on design of coastal management operations wherever possible, particularly with local communities (SAs, DCOs, PCAs) 	
Policy 18 Maintain the full range and quality of existing internationally important coastal habitats within current legal, financial, technical and economic frameworks, and work in partnership to ensure re-creation of those habitats (preferably within the AONB) where they would be lost in necessary coastal realignment schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision for Nature Conservation (CON) Strategic Plan (NCC) Nature conservation designations and legislation (SAs, LAs, SAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classification of legal & financial implications of EU Habitats Directive (SAs, SAs, MAFF) 	

Example 25 Kent Downs AONB Management Strategy

The whole document is presented in landscape format. The back pocket contains the Action Plan and a leaflet detailing links between the Kent Downs AONB and the Boulonnais 'Parc Naturel Régional' in France. There is space in the pocket for progress reports and updated Action Plans as they are produced.



3.4.2. Style

Both the full Plan and any summary document should be written in plain accessible English. Long sentences should be avoided, and the document should be as concise as possible. Use only widely understood words, or where this is not possible offer a clear definition of any jargon or local terms. A professional editor or writer (e.g. a local journalist) can help with both drafting and a final edit to ensure the document is easy to read.

To an extent the writing style will have to be a compromise, given the different audiences of the Plan. Local authority planners, for example, will be looking for absolute clarity, perhaps in the style of their own Development Plan. A more persuasive, journalistic style might be appropriate and most effective with individual landowners.

4. Making it happen – implementation, monitoring and review

All Management Plans need a system which specifies exactly what needs to be done during the period covered by the plan. Management on the ground should be accompanied by effective monitoring, which in turn should feed into a review of the plan policies and the action programme.

This section of the guide deals with how to:

- Ensure the Plan policies are implemented effectively.
- Monitor the extent to which the AONB Plan is implemented in practice, and the consequences of management for the AONB itself.
- Review and update both the main AONB Plan and the Action Plan (where this is a separate document).

4.1. Implementing the Plan

The key to effective implementation of a Management Plan is successful consultation and involvement of all players in the production of the Plan, ensuring commitment to carry out allocated tasks. Policies are often thematic, but their delivery is often geographic, involving action in different places at particular times, by specific individuals. The Plan should inform action at both a local (community) scale, and at a wider regional scale (sometimes going beyond the AONB boundary).

Those drawing up an AONB Management Plan should be clear about the needs and roles of partner organisations, and what they are able to deliver. The tasks and outcomes allocated to each must be appropriate and deliverable. Partner organisations in turn need to be realistic and serious with regard to the responsibilities that they have accepted. The achievement of Plan objectives and the implementation of identified actions falls to many people besides AONB unit staff. AONB unit staff do however have a key role in negotiating priorities with partners and ensuring action.

4.1.1. The Action Plan

The AONB Action Plan needs to be constructed and presented in such a way that different players and partner organisations can relate to it and find it useful to them. The Action Plan needs to identify:

- What is to be done, by whom, and within what timescale.
- What specific targets have been agreed.
- What resources will be required and from where they will be found.
- How the implementation of the Plan is to be monitored and how the Action Plan itself should be reviewed.

Implementation measures need to be presented in an accessible way in the plan. One way is to list them adjacent to the relevant policies. Another approach is to draw together implementation measures into a separate chapter or appendix. It may be useful to present the Action Plan as a separate document which can be reviewed and updated separately from (and more frequently than) the Strategy Plan (see Section 4.3.1 Action Plan updates on page 68).

There are advantages and disadvantages to having a separate Strategy Plan and Action Plan as opposed to a single integrated document. If the main Plan only deals with general strategy, it may be easier for partner organisations to sign up to it. However if partners do not sign up to the Action Plan as well, it may be more difficult to secure action. The solution is likely to depend on the circumstances of each AONB.

Example 26

The South Devon AONB Action Plan links each of the Plan's strategic objectives to a number of specific actions which are described in outline. A lead organisation is identified against each action, together with a target timescale.

Issue		National Policy		
<i>Protection of the natural and man-made heritage of the area</i>		<i>To protect, conserve and where possible enhance the quality and character of the landscape, its heritage, natural habitats and wildlife</i>		
Strategic Objectives		Implementation		Delivery
		Action No	Description	Lead Organisation (Lead = lead organisation)
UNO1	To identify, protect and actively conserve those archaeological, historical and natural features that together form the unique quality of the South Devon Landscape	A1	Identify and survey historic and archaeological features. Include vernacular buildings and artefacts characteristic of the area but lacking protection as sites and monuments. e.g. - Little Elm, historic farms and field patterns, tumples and trackways, agricultural barns, highway features, mills, navigation marks, coastal fortifications, boundary markers, water pumps.	DCT, CCS, LR, Devon Archaeological Society, Local History Groups, Parishes and Voluntary Groups, NCC, TC
		A2	Promote the management and conservation of historic and archaeological sites.	CCS, DCT, LR, LR, TC
		A3	Produce landscape character area statements for use in Local Plans.	NRDC, Devon South Plymouth Area, TC, CCS
		A4	Monitor and record landscape change within the landscape character area using techniques and techniques and photographic survey.	NRDC, CCS
		A5	Community initiatives that help to record, protect and raise awareness of distinctive landscapes, wildlife or historic features (e.g. Parishes, Farming Sites and Local Trails) to be given support.	CCS, LR, DCT, CCS, DCT, Natural History Groups, Parishes, Local History Groups
		A6	Introduce a pilot recording initiative based upon archaeological and historic features in the landscape.	CCS, DCT, LR, LR, Local History Groups, Devon County Museum
		A7	Produce a new strategy to guide Devon County Council's new protection work, management of trees on its own land and the protection of good practice in its nature with its partners.	NRDC, CCS, TC
		A8	Organisations to consult the County archaeological bodies when changes to land form and use are being considered (including Development Control and tree planting). Promotion of this service to partners. Training of staff.	DCT, NRDC, CCS, Landowners and all LAC Partners
		A9	Identify the core biodiversity resource and adopt key indicators to monitor management effects and change. Produce the South Devon National Area profile.	CCS, DCT, LR, LAC, DCT, LAC Partners, RSPB, TC
		A10	Monitor the effects of invasive plant species and provide advice on appropriate effective control. • Invasive Ground • Invasive Woodland • Invasive Broom • Invasive Dogwood	CCS, Natural History Groups, EA, DCT, LR, NCC, CCS

Example 27

The Mendip Hills AONB Action Plan contains estimates of money and workdays required for each action, together with a column for possible additional sources of funding. A target output has been identified for each activity.

3.0 Implementation of the Management Plan 1998-2000									
3.1 Mendip Hills AONB Action Plan 1998-99									
Ref. & W/Plan Guiding Principle	44/1998	Action	Lead and key partners	Timescale	Cost	Additional Funding sources	No. of jobs W/Plan	Target	
1998/99 Special theme - Landscape quality									
3.1.1 L1	Identify and protect field boundaries	1. Undertake field boundary survey based on DMPN work to assess current condition.	W/Plan with vol, P Co	On going	500	Parish Action	15	5 parishes	
		2. Provide advice and information on grants available for restoration work.	W/Plan	On going	10		6	keep record of number of enquiries	
		3. Organise hedge laying and drystone walling courses for communities and individuals.	W/Plan	On going	200		4	2 courses	
		4. Raise awareness of their historic, wildlife and landscape value including promotion of DMPN pilot survey packs.	W/Plan	Sept - March	10		6	monitor uptake of survey packs	
3.1.1 L6	Protect water from damage	1. Survey existing condition of lanes.	W/Plan with vol and experts	June - March	10		10	Complete survey of all lanes	
		2. Produce list of lanes & roads at greatest risk.	W/Plan	March	10		1	produce list	
		3. Pilot schemes e.g. Longhoughton, Priddy.	W/Plan LR	On going	1000	NRDC, W/Plan, LAC	10	2 pilot schemes	
3.1.1 L8 & L9	Value conservation of existing grass	1. Collate all information available on grass in woodland, conservation, agriculture.	W/Plan	On going	10		8	Collate information	

Example 28

The Nidderdale AONB Management Strategy states what role the AONB partnership will play in each task (either 'Advocate', 'Catalyst' or 'Executive') and also identifies which of the AONB's Landscape Character Areas will be affected by any particular piece of work.

OBJECTIVE - Cultural Heritage

Promote awareness of archaeological issues amongst the local community, landowners and visitors to:

- encourage protection, management and interpretation of archaeological heritage;
- promote appreciation of the importance of listed and other traditional buildings to the character of the area;
- encourage local communities and individuals to preserve and enhance the conservation areas in which they live;
- foster conservation of historic parks and gardens through appropriate management.

Action	Lead Agency	JAC Role	Landscape Impact
1. Maintain the AONB Archaeology Sub-Committee to coordinate and support archaeological research and information.	NYCC	Executive	All
2. Campaign for and disseminate information on resources (money and skills) needed to preserve historic buildings.	HBC	Catalyst	All
3. Assist preparation of local schemes for conservation area enhancement and management of historic parks and gardens and applications for grant aid.	HBC	Catalyst	All

4.1.2. Financial planning

All management inputs in the AONB have resource implications, not only for the AONB unit and its parent local authorities or conservation board, but also for other AONB partners. It is important that management policies and the tasks that appear in the Plan are realistic and acceptable to those who have to find the resources for them. Estimates of time and money inputs should be made for each task identified in the Action Plan. Where significant resource implications attach to a particular policy, partners need to agree to this being indicated in the Plan.

Most AONB partners will operate their own budgets, and so an overall financial plan or budget will not usually be included as a distinct part of the AONB Management Plan. Financial considerations for the AONB unit should be included as part of the unit's Business Plan or in a separate Financial Plan.

Where implementation of a policy, or the execution of a task or project, is dependent on securing resources which are not yet available, this should be clearly stated, and where appropriate, from where they might be sought. AONB Management Plans and Business Plans are useful tools to help secure money from outside bodies.

Example 29

The Forest of Bowland AONB Plan was the basis for a successful application for EU Category 5b Structural funding.

European Structural Funds

European structural funds in the form of Objective 5b (1995-99) have been targeted to most of the AONB. The type of projects that have been developed and funded include supporting rural infrastructure and services, improving the physical appearance of rural communities and the surrounding countryside, training, business support, agricultural diversification, development of agri-tourism, protection and conservation of the environment and promotion and marketing of the area for tourism. Funding amounting to approximately £1.2 million has been allocated through the EU to the Forest of Bowland and has attracted a further £4.9 million of matched funding to the area.

From January 2000 the Structural Funds will consist of three Objectives instead of six. Objective 2 will replace 5(B) in parts of Bowland. However, rates of grant aid are likely to be much lower than enjoyed under 5(B).

Example 30 South Devon AONB

The Management Plan identifies possible sources of funding. A separate document was later produced in the form of a costed Action Plan used to bid for Objective 5b monies and Heritage Lottery Funds.



4.2. Monitoring

The AONB partnership needs to develop mechanisms so it can check:

- Whether (or to what extent) tasks identified in the Action Plan are carried out as specified (monitoring action).
- Whether the tasks are having the desired outcomes in terms of the impact on the AONB itself (monitoring condition).

These two types of monitoring are related to one another, but need to be considered separately. Monitoring condition enables the AONB partnership to assess the extent to which actions are achieving the desired outcomes and stated objectives. Sometimes, for example, tasks will be carried out as planned without having the desired effects. At the same time other factors will lead to changes in the AONB, which may necessitate a management response. Both types of monitoring demand resources, but both should be kept as simple as possible.

4.2.1. Monitoring action

Monitoring action involves checking whether tasks have been carried out as specified in the plan. It is often best to maintain an ongoing overview of activities, and pull this information together into quarterly and/or annual monitoring reports.

Monitoring of the work carried out by partner bodies needs to be done sensitively. It may be best if such monitoring is done by the partner bodies themselves, and then reported through a joint meeting with partner representatives. Monitoring of the work carried out by the AONB unit itself can be integrated with the review of the AONB Business Plan.

As a bare minimum tasks can be simply be ticked off as completed, but in addition it is valuable to record whether they were completed ahead or behind schedule, and - if the information is available - at what cost in terms of both time and money. Comparisons can then be made with the original budget, and these data will make it easier to draw up a realistic Action Plan in subsequent years. It is also of value if a record is kept of any particular problems or spin off benefits which have occurred in implementing Action Plan tasks.

4.2.2. Monitoring condition

Monitoring condition is about assessing changes over time. It generally needs to be ongoing, as comparative data will often be the most valuable, although sometimes a single 'snapshot' will reveal what needs to be known. Monitoring will necessarily be selective, concentrating on particular features of interest. These may be indicators selected to provide a meaningful measure of AONB quality. It may be based on repeated surveys or data collected by others (see Appendix 3: Information sources and data for AONB planning on page 91), or it may be more useful to select indicators relevant to specific Management Plan policies.

Many measures will be proxy indicators. For example, data on the populations of a notable species of bird may be an indicator of success in protecting a particular habitat. Data on a particular landscape feature (such as hedgerows) may be related to other, less easily measured changes in the landscape.

Monitoring does not always involve the collection of quantitative data. Fixed point photographs can be a good means of identifying landscape and habitat changes. Surveys of visitors or of local residents can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and will, for example, reveal user perceptions of the quality of services such as transport. These perceptions may often be as important as more tangible measures. One-off or regular meetings of advisory groups representing a particular interest, or of topic/ focus groups of 'users' can also play a significant role in monitoring AONB performance. Professional judgement and experience is needed to interpret the outputs of such groups.

Indicators

A critical aspect of monitoring is selection of indicators (see Table 6 below). This requires an in depth understanding of Plan objectives and of the nature of the AONB. For example, two AONBs might set themselves similar objectives in terms of road verge management, but it might be appropriate for one to measure success in terms of the number of vascular plants per square metre, while in the other a visual measure such as fixed point photography might be deemed more relevant. If stakeholders are engaged in debate about indicators during the participation phase of plan production this will add focus, and it should be possible to achieve unanimity on how success will be measured.

Table 6 Principles for the selection of appropriate indicators

Indicators which measure the quality of aspects of AONBs should be:

- Expressed in terms that the interested public can understand and relate to.
- Relevant to issues and policies highlighted within the Management Plan.
- Capable of replication to show trends and change over time and permit the identification of baselines or bench-marks.
- Applicable at a range of scales in order that data can be split down to a ward or parish level, and also understood at a county, regional or national level.
- Based on standard procedures wherever possible in order to contribute to national or regional datasets and to enable comparisons, for example with adjacent areas or with other AONBs.
- Complementary to, or integrated with, other indicators, including the government's published 'Quality of Life Counts' and to the Countryside Agency's 'State of the Countryside' reports.

Monitoring can use up a disproportionate amount of resource. It is therefore important to consider how information is going to be used before time and money is spent collecting it. An AONB monitoring strategy will:

- Identify the features or problems to be monitored.
- Select key indicators or values to be recorded.
- Review which other organisations are already collecting relevant data, with a view both to sharing data and to ensuring that data is collected to a common methodology. This will enable comparisons to be made.
- Decide how the recording is to be carried out.
- Allocate responsibility (and perhaps resources) to do the job.

A great deal of ongoing monitoring is undertaken by other bodies in areas of relevance to their own interests. For example, English Nature have their own well established programmes for monitoring species and habitat change, while the Countryside Agency uses a comprehensive set of indicators in its annual 'State of the Countryside' reports. The AONB unit needs to take advantage of these programmes and use the results to assess the results of its own planning and management. One useful function of the Management Plan may be to list the different kinds of monitoring that are taking place within the AONB and the organisations responsible.

'Best Value'

'Best Value' affects all AONB units. This is a legal requirement on local authorities and should be considered good practice for the AONB partnership and its members. It may provide the basis for developing a

Example 31

The Tamar Valley AONB Plan includes a section on the philosophy, practice and implication of 'Best Value' for the AONB and for partners.

Under new legislation, Local Authorities have a duty of Best Value. This means that the authority must provide services to clear standards and targets. Authorities must also make continuous improvements in the way they work and review their performance every five years. Four central tests will be applied to services - the four 'C's are:

Challenge	- challenging why, how and by whom services are provided
Consult	- consulting local people and service users about the quality of services provided
Compare	- comparing performance with other similar organisations
Compete	- competing to secure efficient and effective services

The Management Plan has been developed on the basis of extensive consultation and shows the results of the first two 'C's - challenge and consult. The Action Programme will help measure the other 'C's. The implementation of the Plan relies on many agencies and organisations working in partnership to achieve common objectives. Such partnership working should minimise duplication of effort and maximise utilisation of resources to ensure Best Value. The AONB Service will be in a position to ensure that all the central tests are applied and acted upon.

Effective monitoring and co-ordination will be needed to ensure delivery of the Plan's objectives in an efficient and effective way. Wider performance indicators will enable the assessment of the medium and long-term effectiveness of the AONB Plan and in many instances baseline research is needed to establish baseline conditions and suitable indicators.



Example 32

The Chichester Harbour AONB Plan includes a section which details all the monitoring carried out in the area by other agencies.

2. Monitoring Change

Monitoring has been an essential part of the Harbour Management Plan. The monitoring programme consists of a number of indicators which are regularly sampled. These have been identified in the Harbour Audit as being particularly significant or appropriate and are listed below:-

Vertebrate Fauna
Vegetation
Vessel movement
Vessel and mooring facility numbers
Casual visitors
Recreational Water Users
Physiographic features

3. Monitoring of these indicators is a valuable tool for assessing the well-being of the harbour and the level of use of its resources.

4. These indicators are not comprehensive and some change may occur which makes it essential that some degree of flexibility is retained and that there is an element of continuous review.

5. The officers' assessment of the results of monitoring and any recommendations for any action to be taken should be made on a regular basis and submitted to the Advisory Committee and Conservancy.

Example 33

Wye Valley AONB has topic strategies in Sustainable Tourism, Landscape, Woodland Management and Nature Conservation with attendant topic groups meeting every 6 months to implement, review/monitor and update.



common approach between different local authorities on certain issues. The 'Best Value' approach can be incorporated into the AONB Plan, helping to identify the most useful performance indicators. The AONB management planning process can also provide useful Best Value outcome measures for the partnership and for partner organisations themselves.

4.3. The Management Plan review

CRoW requires that AONB Management Plans be reviewed and renewed at intervals not exceeding five years. A condition of Countryside Agency funding is that partners should produce and publish annual reviews of activity and achievements (see Appendix 2: AONB funding on page 78). The Action Plan therefore needs to be reviewed and updated annually, the AONB Plan as a whole needs to be reviewed at five yearly intervals. Both reviews should ideally be carried out as an ongoing process, integrated with plan implementation.

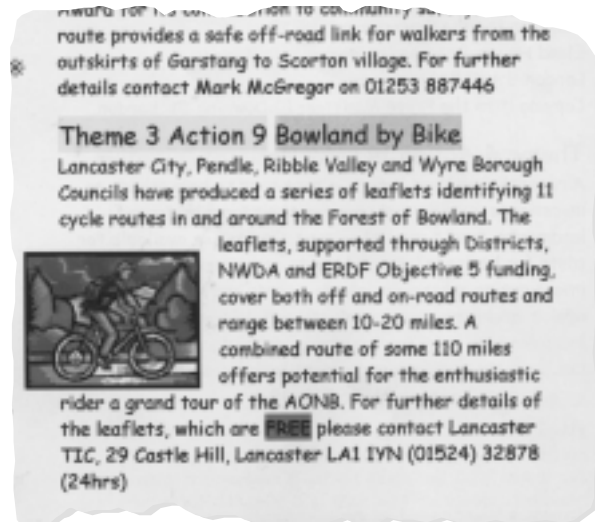
4.3.1. Action Plan updates

An annual review of the Action Plan is a useful way of responding to changes in resource availability and to what may be changing priorities of partner bodies. One approach which combines medium term planning with considerable flexibility is to produce a three year Action Plan on a one year rolling programme. Actions identified for years 2 and 3 are indicative only, and can be amended at the start of each year.

No timetable will suit all partners, but if a monitoring report is circulated within 2 or 3 months of the financial year end this can feed into half year reviews in September and budget and business planning cycles over the winter. The Action Plan for the next year can be circulated in February/March, once partners have firmed up their own plans for the coming financial year.

Example 34

The Forest of Bowland AONB produced an Action Plan update in the form of a widely distributed newsletter. This helps demonstrate to a wide audience that management planning is not just a bureaucratic exercise, and means that partner's inputs are acknowledged in a public way.



If the main body of the Management Plan has been well produced, with clear policies and priorities, then Action Plan updates should be a comparatively straightforward task. A good Plan will also mean that AONB staff have a clear starting point when discussing proposed actions with partner organisations.

4.3.2. The strategic review

Where possible, the strategic review of the Plan should be a continuation of the original planning process. Hopefully by the time of Plan review, thinking and relationships will have moved forward. The character of the AONB and its stakeholders are likely to be well known, an adopted Plan already exists, and people may have a clearer view of AONB purposes and approach. The process of Plan review enables the AONB partnership to build on the experience of developing and implementing previous Plans.

When undertaking the strategic review, it is important not to assume that things are the same as they were five years previously. It is almost certain that the AONB landscape and the issues impacting upon it will have changed to some degree, that the needs and views of its stakeholders are different, and that the wider social, economic and policy context presents new opportunities and threats. A simple update of the previous Plan is unlikely to be sufficient. Every element of a previous plan should be carefully considered, and the following fundamental questions should be asked:

- How have the AONB and the issues which affect it changed?
- Is the Vision still appropriate?
- Are the policy objectives still appropriate, and to what extent are they being achieved?
- Are the best methods/actions being used to achieve outcomes?

Much of the advice contained in Section 2 The process (on page 30) is just as relevant when reviewing the plan as it is when producing the first post-CRoW Management Plan. Effective participation and consultation with partners and stakeholders will be just as important. Time and resources needed for the review may be comparable to the investment required for the first Plan. It is wise to begin the process of review up to two years before the end of the existing Plan's life.

The work of reviewing the AONB Plan may be spread by making it a continuous process, closely integrated with monitoring. This offers major benefits in terms of keeping key players 'on board'. One way of doing this is to focus on the policies section of the plan, taking each topic, or the policies relevant to different groups of partners, in turn as a rolling programme. This has the advantage that as the objectives and actions of one section of the Plan are monitored, reviewed and updated, amendments needed to other sections, including the AONB assessment and vision, are likely to emerge naturally from the process.

Another approach is to link the review to an annual implementation audit of tasks and outcomes. This is particularly appropriate where a separate Action Plan has been produced. It will be readily apparent which policies are succeeding and which failing. Necessary amendments can be logged ready for the five-year strategic review.

In practice, a variety of methods are likely to be appropriate. Review should not be a mechanical procedure. It should be an integral part of the management of the AONB, involving all the members of the partnership. Whatever review process is adopted, a new Plan should be published every five years (or more frequently) and copies lodged with the bodies stated in Section 1 Management Plans and CRoW on page 14. This provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the AONB partnership and to secure renewed commitment to the AONB and its Management Plan.

4.3.3. Reviewing the process

Towards the end of the process of Management Plan production there is an opportunity to review that process with the AONB partnership. Consider what worked well, and what should be done differently another time. Outcomes from this review can be recorded and used when planning the next planning process.

Appendix 1: Legislation and legal obligations

This appendix outlines the obligations of local authorities, conservation boards, and others following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) with regard to:

- The designation of AONBs, their purposes and the responsibility for their management, including the creation of conservation boards.
- The production and publication of AONB Management Plans.
- The legal status of AONB Management Plans and their relationship to other statutory plans, most particularly plans produced under the town and country planning legislation.
- The obligations of other bodies to 'have regard' to the purposes of AONB management.

Please note that this appendix deals only with obligations of AONB authorities, AONB partners and others under CRoW. It is not a definitive legal statement, and it does not purport to address other legislation affecting or relevant to AONBs. It needs to be read in conjunction with the legislation itself, with any subsequent regulations or policy guidance, and with any relevant decisions of the courts. The full text of CRoW may be obtained from The Stationery Office or read and downloaded from the Internet. Note however that forthcoming policy guidance is likely to change some areas and to define others more clearly.

Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) introduced some important provisions to allow the better management and protection of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). It

- Consolidates the provisions regarding the designation and purposes of AONBs previously contained in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC) as modified by subsequent legislation.
- Provides for the creation of conservation boards for selected individual AONBs by means of an establishment order made by the Secretary of State.
- Requires the preparation and publication of a Management Plan, and for its periodic review, for every AONB by the appropriate local authorities, or by an AONB conservation board where one is established.
- Places a duty on 'relevant authorities' when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

I. Designation and purposes of AONBs and responsibility for their management

The 1949 Act gave the then National Parks Commission (now the Countryside Agency in England) the power to designate AONBs, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State. The only criteria were that the areas designated should be outside National Parks, and should appear to the designating agency to be of such outstanding natural beauty that the provisions of the 1949 NPAC Act should apply to them. These provisions were that local planning authorities whose area includes all or part of an AONB should have the power (subject to certain restrictions) to take such actions as appear to them expedient to accomplish the purpose of protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Subsequent changes in legislation and policy have accorded AONBs a high degree of protection through the planning system and have provided some central funding for their management. The Environment Act 1995 changed the purpose of ‘protecting and enhancing’ AONBs to ‘conserving and enhancing’ but still in regard only to the powers of local authorities. No statutory duties were placed on local authorities actively to manage AONBs in any particular way.

CRoW **Sections 82-84** generally re-enact the provisions of the 1949 Act with regard to AONBs but with some significant changes. **Section 82** states explicitly that the purpose of designating AONBs is conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. It also extends to AONBs some of the provisions of the 1949 Act (as modified by subsequent legislation) which previously applied only to National Parks. These include a duty on the Countryside Agency to give advice in connection with development matters, and to be consulted in connection with development plans, with access agreements and with access orders. However with the exception of the requirement to prepare and publish management plans, there is no significant extension of local authority obligations with regard to the AONB. **Section 84** restates the 1949 Act’s provision that “a local planning authority whose area consists of or includes the whole or any part of an area of outstanding natural beauty has power” to take all such action as appears to them expedient for the accomplishment of the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty or so much of it as is included in their area” (**s84(4)**). Except for the duty to prepare and publish management plans (see below) local authorities have permissive powers, rather than prescriptive obligations.

Section 86 empowers the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to make Establishment Orders setting up conservation boards for individual AONBs following consultation with the Countryside Agency and all affected local authorities. A majority of affected local authorities must be in favour of an Order before it is made.

Powers may be transferred from local authorities to the conservation board or, where appropriate, may be shared with it. The powers of individual conservation boards are to be specified in their particular Establishment Orders, which have to be approved by Parliament. These powers must exclude development plan and development control functions, defined under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Other obligations and powers are conferred on conservation boards automatically by virtue of earlier Acts that CRow amends to make conservation boards 'relevant authorities' for certain purposes. For example under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 conservation boards' finances are subject to audit; under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 they may enter into management agreements with landowners for the purpose of conserving or enhancing natural beauty or amenity, or promoting its enjoyment.

Schedule 13 to CRow specifies the constitution and membership of conservation boards, to which:

- 40% of members are appointed by the AONB local authorities;
- at least 20% of members are appointed by parishes within the AONB;
- the remaining members (a maximum of 40%) are appointed by the Secretary of State to reflect a variety of interests such as conservation, land management and recreational use of the AONB.

Section 87 describes the general purposes and powers of conservation boards. In the exercise of its functions a conservation board is to have regard to two purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.
- To increase understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the AONB.

If there is conflict between these functions then greater weight should be attached to the conservation of natural beauty. This corresponds to the 'Sandford principle' which, following changes made in the Environment Act 1995, has operated formally in the National Parks.

Conservation boards also have a third duty; in having regard to its two purposes a conservation board must also "seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the area of outstanding natural beauty, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of outstanding natural beauty" (**s87(1)**). This provision is similar to that which applies to National Park Authorities following the Environment Act 1995. This duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities was extended to all local authorities by the Local Government Act 2000. Its application to conservation boards

means that they have the same obligations as local authorities in this respect. **Section 87** also gives conservation boards the same general duties as apply to local authorities under Sections 37 and 38 of the 1968 Countryside Act, of “protection of interests of the countryside and the avoidance of pollution” (**s87(3)**).

The powers of a conservation board under **Section 87** are worded slightly differently from those of local authorities. They “include power to do anything which, in the opinion of the board, is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to” (a) the accomplishment of its two purposes and (b) the carrying out of any other legal functions (including those transferred to it under its Establishment Order and under CRow, above). **Schedule 14** explicitly allows a conservation board to buy and sell land and also to charge a fee for its services.

II. AONB Management Plans: production, publication and review

Section 89 of CRow requires a Management Plan to be prepared and published for each AONB. Where a conservation board has been established, responsibility for the Management Plan will rest with the board. Elsewhere, Management Plans will be the responsibility of the local authority. Where there is more than one such local authority, they should act jointly to do this. AONB partnerships (that are not conservation boards) should be constituted so that members of all AONB local authorities are represented. They will then be able to take drafts back to their own local authority committees for approval and endorsement of the policies agreed by their representative or the partnership. It will be important to agree this process in the early stages of Plan production. Conservation boards will write their own Plan.

Where a conservation board is set up, it must publish an AONB Management Plan within two years. For AONBs without a conservation board, the local authority must publish a Plan within three years of this legislation coming into force (i.e. by 31 March 2004) or in the case of any new AONB, within three years from the date of designation; this requirement ceases to apply if an AONB conservation board is set up within that period.

Many AONBs already have in place a non-statutory Management Plan. Such Plans, if prepared by a local authority or joint committee, may, following review, be adopted as the statutory plan by either a conservation board or a local authority, and published within the same timescale as above. Where a local authority has published a statutory plan, a conservation board set up subsequently may adopt the Plan within six months of the board’s establishment.

Section 89 also sets out the requirements for reviewing Management Plans. Once adopted and published, Management Plans are to be reviewed at intervals not exceeding five years. The exception is where a conservation board has adopted a local authority statutory plan, in which case the first review must be within three years.

Local authorities in England proposing to adopt, review or publish a Management Plan must give due notice to the Countryside Agency and to English Nature. Such Plans (and any proposed amendments) must be copied to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Conservation boards must in addition copy their draft Plans to all relevant local authorities, and must take any observations made into account. There is no legal requirement in CRoW for public consultation on the AONB Management Plan¹. However, good practice, and the advice of the Countryside Agency, is that consultation and participation is essential to the partnership approach on which the success of every AONB depends. At an international level, this principle is enshrined in the 1998 Aarhus Convention (formally, the 'Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters') which was signed by the UK in 1998.

AONB Management Plans are statutory documents, as are local authority development plans (i.e. structure plans, local plans, unitary development plans) and other documents such as Community Strategies.

Section 89 of CRoW requires that AONB local authorities or conservation boards produce a plan which 'formulates their policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it' (**S89(1) and (2)**). This formula follows the provision in the Environment Act 1995, which requires National Park Authorities to prepare Management Plans on a similar basis. The wording of this section implies that the AONB authorities' policies need not be limited to those aspects which they can deliver themselves, and the content of an AONB Management Plan is in any case not restricted by such a requirement. It is the view of the Countryside Agency that the scope and content of an AONB Management Plan should go beyond any legal minimum. In addition to the policies which apply specifically to the obligations of the local authorities or conservation boards (which are required by law, and to which they can be legally held) or which are directed principally at the AONB staff unit, the Management Plan should also contain the policies which apply to AONB partner. These policies would not be regarded as legally binding on those to whom they apply.

AONB Management Plans should always seek to link across to other statutory plans and strategies which relate to their geographical area. The content of AONB Plans should both inform and reflect the content

1. Government guidance on the preparation of development plans stresses that 'consultation is best undertaken on the basis of key issues consultation involving the broad strategy and direction of a plan rather than on the basis of a full draft Plan' (PPG12 Annex C s1). It provides a list of agencies and organisations which may need to be consulted on local plans and udps. This list may be helpful also in the preparation of AONB Management Plans.

of these other plans. Planning Policy Guidance states that ‘the primary objective of [AONB] designation is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Local authorities should reflect this objective in their preparation of structure and local plans and in the exercise of development control” (PPG7²). The relationship is therefore a two-way one. Relevant sections of the AONB Plan can be adopted by the local authority, where they feel this appropriate, as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Such sections should correspond to the guidelines provided in PPG12³ (which gives government guidance on development planning in the town and country planning system).

PPG12 states that SPG ‘must itself be consistent with national and regional planning guidance, as well as the policies set out in the adopted development plan. It should be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant plan policy or proposal which it supplements. It should be issued separately from the [development] plan and made publicly available; consultation should be undertaken, and the status of the SPG should be made clear. SPG should be reviewed on a regular basis alongside reviews of the development plan policies or proposals to which it relates’ (**PPG12 s3.15**). ‘SPG should be prepared in consultation with the general public, businesses, and other interested parties, and their views should be taken into account before it is finalised. It should then be the subject of a council resolution to adopt it as supplementary guidance. On adoption, a statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the local authority’s response to those representations should be made available with each copy of the SPG (either in an annex or in a separate document)’ (**PPG12 s3.16**). There should be no difficulty in principle in meeting all these criteria in the preparation of appropriate sections of the AONB Management Plan. There is a danger however that these may be unduly influenced by the need to be consistent with existing development plan policies, and where there is conflict this should be clearly stated; such sections will clearly not be eligible for adoption as SPG but may feed in to the next revision of the development plan. Where sections of the AONB Management Plan that do correspond to the SPG criteria are to be adopted as SPG, they should be reproduced in a separate document together with the consultation responses as required by PPG12 and this document can then be adopted formally. Further guidance on preparation of SPG is available from DTLR⁴.

2. The countryside: environmental quality and economic and social development, Planning Policy Guidance 7, 1997, DoE.

3. Development plans and regional planning guidance, Planning Policy Guidance 12, 1992, DoE.

4. Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice, 1998, DETR.

IV. The obligation to ‘have regard’

Section 85 of CROW states that “In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty” (**s85(1)**). ‘Relevant authority’ is defined as

any Minister of the Crown, any public body, any statutory undertaker or any person holding public office. Public bodies include all arms of both central and local government (including, for example, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Environment Agency, parish councils, and joint committees of local authorities). Statutory undertakers include public utilities such as water, gas, electricity and telecommunications companies.

The section is modelled on provisions in section 11A of the 1949 NPAC Act, inserted by section 62(1) of the Environment Act 1995, relating to the duties of similar bodies towards National Park purposes. This general legal requirement to 'have regard' is not defined. In the context of AONBs, the requirement applies only to the general AONB purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. It does not automatically extend to any AONB Management Plan objectives or policies which flow from that purpose. Moreover, the requirement means only that those to whom it applies have to take the AONB purpose into account in making any particular decision, not necessarily to allow the purpose to determine the outcome of the decision or to carry any particular weight in the decision-making process. The requirement does not override other considerations that have to be taken into account by relevant authorities in carrying out any function. However the requirement does mean that the purpose of conserving or enhancing natural beauty of the AONB may not be disregarded. This should act as some incentive at least for all agencies to consider seriously the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan.

Appendix 2: AONB funding

This appendix:

- Outlines the arrangements for securing 'core funding' for AONB partnership activities from the Countryside Agency.
- Provides advice on procedure and principles for securing project funding through Countryside Agency Regional Offices.
- Suggests sources for additional external funding from other agencies and bodies.

Government funding to the Countryside Agency will increase from just over £5 million in 2001-2 to £6.7 million in 2003-4, and the government has indicated that its long term support to AONBs will extend beyond 2004/5. The money is intended to enable the Agency to offer an agreed level of support for the carrying out of core functions in each AONB in England (including the production of Management Plans), whilst allowing separate bids for the implementation of identified management objectives to be made to regional offices of the Agency.

The Agency has published its arrangements for AONB funding¹ and these are summarised below. All AONBs can bid into this new system from 2001 onwards. The Agency expects that all AONBs will be working to the new system by 2005. The Agency explicitly encourages AONB partnerships to bid for external sources of grant aid.

Core funding

Non-conservation board AONBs

For AONBs without a conservation board, the Countryside Agency will grant aid core costs at up to a maximum of 75%. Agency grants for core functions, negotiated annually, will be available for six years initially.

Only AONB partnerships and/or their host local authorities can apply for core cost grant aid. The level of grant aid to which each AONB can aspire is determined by a funding formula arising from the 2000 AONB core funding study². This is based on an expectation that each AONB will need a team of around 3 staff to carry out core functions, with additional costs and staff according to the size and complexity of each AONB. The notional costs (for 2001-2) are based on base funding of £102,000 per AONB. To this base funding is added an area weighting of £60 per square km and administrative weighting of £6,000 per local authority. These figures indicate the levels around which grant aid might be negotiated. The actual grant given to an AONB will depend on local circumstances, actual costs and whether or not partnerships are able to achieve certain conditions as follows:

- **Core Functions**³. Only work that contributes to core functions will be potentially eligible for the 75% grant aid rate. The Agency has defined the core functions of an AONB Staff Unit as:

1. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Funding Policy, 2001, Countryside Agency.

2. A system for allocating core funding to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, November 2000, unpublished report to the Countryside Agency.

3. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Funding Policy, Annex 1, 2001, Countryside Agency.

- Developing a vision and strategy for AONB management.
- Preparing, with constituent local authorities, an AONB Management Plan as required by the CRoW Act.
- In the early stages of AONB development, promoting the vision and strategy to help distinguish the AONB from adjacent countryside.
- Implementing the Management Plan and coordinating implementation by others.
- Coordinating or advising on local authority services in the AONB, to go beyond the normal level of service in countryside management.
- Monitoring and reporting on progress against Management Plan targets.
- Accessing resources for undertaking management activities, including external financing, project development and proposals, and providing matching funding for special projects.
- Tapping into advice, and liaison with AONBs at a national level
Providing an internal management role to coordinate AONB protection.
- Promoting the value of the AONB to the community.
- Developing an involvement by the community in the management of the AONB.
- Providing planning advice and related activities.
- Seeking additional funds to assist with the delivery of management activity.
- **Eligible costs.**⁴ Grant for the above core functions will be calculated on the basis of specific eligible costs, which include:
 - Costs for employment of staff: recruitment, salaries, accommodation, training etc.
 - Other costs essential to provision of the core functions e.g a public relations/publications, specialist external advice, research studies.
 - External costs incurred in the production/publication of the management plan (e.g. of community consultation).
 - Costs of setting up/administering partnerships may also be considered: (e.g. legal costs of drawing up a partnership agreement) where this cannot be provided by one of the partners.
 - External costs of implementing a management/governance structure review process if necessary.
- **Requirements.** To be successful in obtaining a grant, partnerships will need to:
 - Demonstrate that they have gone through an objective management review process and that they have achieved (or are committed to moving towards) an agreed staffing and governance structure.
 - Demonstrate that they can perform core functions shown above.
 - Produce supporting information (as a 'Grant support statement') based on the AONB Management Plan and a Business Plan, outlining how core functions are to be performed throughout the

4. Ibid.

year and how the unit will discharge the responsibility of producing the new statutory Management Plan on behalf of the AONB local authorities and the resulting outcomes on the ground.

- Give a detailed breakdown of the actual costs: including staff salaries/on costs, accommodation, support (including specialist advice), public relations and any governance costs.
- Sign up to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Countryside Agency that outlines the responsibilities of each party and commits them over a six year period at least at current levels of support (reviewed every three years).

In addition to complying with the Countryside Agency's standard conditions of grant aid, partners will also need to:

- Produce a high quality AONB Management Plan according to the clauses in the CRoW Act.
- Set up steering arrangements to monitor, steer and review the work of the core unit.
- Produce and publish annual reviews of activity and achievements to publicise the work of the AONB core unit.

Conservation Boards

Section 91 of CRoW allows the Secretary of State “to make grants to a conservation board, of such amounts and on such terms and conditions” as s/he sees fit. Before determining the amount to be paid, the Secretary of State must consult the Countryside Agency. The existence of this provision does not prevent grants going directly to conservation boards from the Agency. The Countryside Agency has declared that conservation boards will be funded in the same way as other AONBs. There may be extra costs associated with the setting up of a conservation board, which can be met as part of core costs in the short term. An independent board may also have some extra running costs. However, there are no special funding arrangements or budgets for conservation boards. The incentive for setting up conservation boards is to provide the most appropriate administration, not to gain financially.

Countryside Agency project funding

The Countryside Agency has declared its intention to continue to support projects in AONBs. Funding for projects will be available at grant rates of up to 50%, under the Agency's standard funding rules. Anyone can apply for project support, including AONB units, AONB partnership members as well as other bodies. The AONB officer's comments may be sought on bids from other bodies. To be eligible for support, a project must be:

- Clearly related to the AONB Management Plan.
- Related to the Agency's own strategic priorities.

Regional offices of the Countryside Agency are individually responsible for negotiating funding with each AONB and offering grant aid. AONB officers are advised to contact the appropriate regional office for advice on specific procedures to follow in applying for project support.

Monitoring and review of Countryside Agency funding arrangements

The funding approach outlined above will be evaluated by the Countryside Agency to ensure that it is achieving better management of AONBs both via new staff in post, but more importantly, through more work on the ground. The funding policy will be reviewed by:

- Monitoring changes in AONB governance and management structures.
- Inspection of annual reports that are to be produced by AONBs.
- These reports should be related to the outputs stated on the annual grant support statement and the implementation of the Management Plan as a whole.
- Attendance of regional Countryside Agency staff at AONB partnership meetings, officer working groups and AONB officer steering groups.

Other sources of income

In grant aiding up to a maximum of 75% of AONB core costs, the Countryside Agency assumes that the balance of core costs would normally be supplied by each AONB's local authorities. With respect to other costs (including projects) which the Agency can fund up to a maximum of 50%, the balance may be sought from any source. However the Agency encourages AONB partnerships to bid for (and will consider applications for it to provide match funding for) external sources of grant aid for AONB projects, for example the Heritage Lottery Fund and landfill tax.

Schedule 14 of CRow explicitly allows a conservation board to buy and sell land, to borrow and lend money, and also to charge a fee for its services. This puts conservation boards on a par with local authorities in this respect. However, these activities may only be undertaken in order to facilitate, or in a way which is conducive or incidental to, the accomplishment of its functions or the carrying out of its legal functions. Neither local authorities nor conservation boards may engage in commercial activities for their own sake. In practice, whilst charges for services and other revenue earning activities may contribute significantly to the income of an AONB partnership, it is likely that AONB partnerships will need to continue to seek external funding to supplement the income received from the Countryside Agency and from local authorities. The remainder of this appendix indicates some of the sources of external funding - either for the AONB unit or for partner activities - that may be available.

ERDP – the England Rural Development Programme

The England Rural Development Programme aims to help farmers and foresters to respond better to consumer requirements and become more competitive, diverse, flexible and environmentally responsible. It also provides help to rural businesses and communities that need to adapt and develop. There are two main priority areas for funding:

- Land-based schemes to conserve and improve the environment (**L** below). These compensate farmers for income lost when establishing or improving environmentally beneficial aspects of farmland and in the case of the Organic Farming Scheme promote the development of new markets for farmers.
- Project-based schemes to enable farming, forestry and other rural businesses and communities to adapt to changing circumstances and to develop (**P** below). These are focussed around individual developments and projects, and aim to promote imaginative and varied schemes within rural areas.

Information on all the schemes below can be found at:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/default.htm

Countryside Stewardship Scheme (**L**)

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is the Government's main scheme for countryside outside of ESAs (below). It aims, through the payment of grants, to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside, enhance, restore and recreate targeted landscapes, their wildlife habitats and historical features, and to improve opportunities for public access. Farmers and land managers enter 10-year agreements to manage land in an environmentally beneficial way in return for annual payments. Grants are also available towards capital works such as hedge laying and planting, repairing dry stone walls, etc. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/css/cssindex.htm

Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme (**L**)

The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are designated areas of the countryside where nationally important landscape, wildlife or historic interest is threatened by farming practices. In each of these a 'menu' of tiered payments is available to encourage farmers and landowners to maintain and enhance landscape features of wildlife and historic interest. There are now 22 ESAs in England, covering some 10% of agricultural land. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/esas/esasindex.htm

Hill Farm Allowances (HFA) (**L**)

There are three elements to the payments under HFA. First, all eligible claimants receive a basic area payment. This is differentiated by land classification and size of holding. Additional top-up payments of either

10 or 20% are available to those claimants meeting certain environmental criteria. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/hfas/hfasindex.htm

The Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) (L)

OFS provides financial help to farmers moving from conventional to organic farming during the conversion process. Land must be registered as 'in conversion' to organic farming by an organic sector body. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/ofsofsindex.htm

Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (L)

The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) aims to encourage farmers to convert productive agricultural land to woodlands by providing annual payments for 10 years (for predominantly conifer woodland) or 15 years (for predominantly broadleaved woodland) to help offset the agricultural income foregone. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/fwps/fwpsindex.htm

Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) (L)

The Woodland Grant Scheme pays grants to help with the creation of new woodlands and to encourage the good management and regeneration of existing woodlands. The grants are paid as part of a management contract with the woodland owner or occupier. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/landbased/wgs/wgsindex.htm
also www.forestry.gov.uk

Vocational Training Scheme (P)

Vocational Training Scheme aims to improve the skills base in rural areas. The objective is to prepare farmers for farming and farm diversification compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of the landscape and the environment, and to equip woodland managers to apply forest management practices that improve the economic, social and ecological functions of forests. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/projectbased/training/trainindex.htm

Processing and Marketing Grants (P)

These grants provide capital investment in projects aimed at improving the processing and marketing of agricultural products in order to increase their competitiveness in the market place and their added value. Such investments must contribute to improving the situation of the agriculture sector producing the relevant basic commodity, and be of appropriate economic benefit to the primary producers of that commodity. Support could be available for new or innovative products, improvement of the quality of existing products or to improve or

rationalise processing facilities. Grants are available towards the cost of new buildings, the refurbishment of old buildings and the purchase of new equipment. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/projectbased/pmg/pmgindex.htm

Rural Enterprise Scheme (P)

The Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) provides assistance for projects that help to develop more sustainable, diversified and enterprising rural economies and communities. Its coverage is wide-ranging but the primary aim is to help farmers adapt to changing markets and develop new business opportunities. RES also has a broader role in supporting the adaptation and development of the rural economy, community, heritage and environment. See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/projectbased/res/resindex.htm

The Energy Crops Scheme

The Energy Crops Scheme is a DEFRA scheme run in partnership with the Forestry Commission. The scheme has two elements:

- Establishment grants for short rotation coppice and miscanthus (L)
- Grants (up to 50%) for establishing producer groups - for short rotation coppice. (P) See:

www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/projectbased/energy/energyindex.htm

see also:

www.dti.gov.uk/renewable/crops.html

Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)

The SRB aims to:

- Enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people.
- Address social exclusion and enhance opportunities for the disadvantaged.
- Promote sustainable regeneration, improving and protecting the environment and infrastructure, including housing.
- Support and promote growth in local economies and businesses.
- Tackle crime and drug abuse and improve community safety.

Unlike some funding sources there is no specific requirement for match funding although working in partnership with other sources of funding and support is central; bidders need to 'maximise investment and non-financial support from the private sector'. Sources of other public funds may include grant regimes operated by Government Departments or support from publicly sponsored organisations, such as the Housing Corporation. SRB resources may contribute to schemes also supported by European funding, including Structural Funds (i.e. ESF and ERDF).

See:

www.regeneration.detr.gov.uk/srb/

and:

www.eeda.org.uk/main.asp?s=funding&p=srb.htm

European Structural Funds

The EU Structural Funds exist to help areas facing social and economic difficulties. The funds are intended to be used to help sponsor projects which will directly address locally identified needs (e.g. to help train people with new skills, or help set-up new businesses). Under the 1999 EU Structural Funds Regulations there are 4 separate EU funds to be drawn on. One of these relates specifically to fisheries and the other three are: **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, the **European Social Fund (ESF)** and the **European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)**. Structural funds also define 4 objectives relevant to the UK, as follows:

- **Objective 1** - to assist the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind. In England, three areas have been designated for Objective 1 support from 2000 – 2006. These are: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; South Yorkshire, and Merseyside. (ERDF, ESF and EAGGF provide support under this Objective).
- **Objective 2** (ESF and ERDF) – to support the economic and social conversion of areas facing structural difficulties and seriously affected by industrial decline. As a first step, AONB officers should establish whether any part of their AONB falls within a designated Objective 2 area.
- **Objective 3** (ESF) - to combat long term unemployment and help the young (under 25) unemployed by supporting the adaptation and modernisation of policies and systems of education, training and employment. Applied nationally except for the Objective 1 areas.
- **Objective 4** (ESF) - to support workers experiencing industrial change; applies nationally outside of Objective 1 areas. This has not been run previously in Britain.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – ERDF covers Objectives 1 and 2 and is coordinated by DTLR through Government Offices for the Regions. The size of region covered varies between the objectives; for example, in the case of Objective 1, only Merseyside is eligible for ERDF funding in England. Objective 2 areas are sub-regional areas, mostly in the North (of England) and the Midlands. Grants are paid for projects concerned with economic regeneration and development which meet the programme objectives set out in the Single Programming Document for that area. These are prepared by

Government Offices in consultation with local partners including local authorities, Learning and Skills Councils (LASCs), representatives of Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) and the private and voluntary sectors.

ERDF can be used to support both capital and revenue projects. Currently around 65% of funds are used for capital purposes (for example, transport facilities, environmental improvements and industrial sites and factory units). An ERDF grant normally pays up to 50% of the eligible costs of a project; but can be more in Objective 1 areas. The remaining, 'match' funds must be found by the prospective ERDF recipient either from within its own resources, or from other organisations, both in the public and private sector. An important source of match funding is from central government through the SRB. Around 35% is paid for revenue projects (for example business development advice to small and medium size businesses, tourism promotion and participation in research and development initiatives).

See:

www.regeneration.detr.gov.uk/policies/erdf/,

also:

www.dti.gov.uk/regional/assistedareas/assisted.htm

and:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/activity/erdf/erdf_en.htm.

European Social Fund (ESF) – ESF is designed to improve employment opportunities for several groups including young people, the long-term unemployed and those in areas affected by industrial change in the European Union. This is achieved by contributing financial support for the running costs for vocational training schemes, guidance and counselling projects and job creation measures and other steps to improve employability and skills. This is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Skills and is administered by the Government Offices for the Region. See: www.esfnews.org.uk.

European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) – EAGGF is the responsibility of DEFRA. It is the source of funds used to underpin UK agriculture under the Common Agricultural Policy, but funding from the 'guidance' section is increasingly used both for agro-environmental programmes in the ERDP (such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Stewardship, see below) and also for some schemes which have nothing to do with agriculture such as LEADER+ (see below). See: www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/structure/obj1.htm#EAGGF3.

LEADER initiative

LEADER stands for Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de L'Economie Rurale (links between actions for the development of the rural economy). The objective of LEADER+ is to assist rural development by supporting experimental, integrated local area-based development strategies, which in turn will encourage the development and testing of new approaches to sustainable rural development. It focuses on innovative, local area based development strategies implemented by local people working in partnership. It is available to all rural areas in England and aims to complement the raft of measures which form part of the England Rural Development Plan. Three main activities ('actions') may be supported under LEADER+:

Action 1 - integrated, innovative rural development strategies. The suggested themes for development strategies are very general: the use of know-how and new technologies to make rural products and services more competitive; improving the quality of life in rural areas; adding value to local products e.g. via collective actions; and making the best use of cultural and natural resources. Strategies must be innovative and ambitious. Most importantly, they must demonstrate feasibility. Local action groups will be required to play an active part in the UK network to help disseminate good practice.

Action 2 - National and trans-national co-operation with groups with strategies supported under Action 1. This must involve a joint project between:

- Local action groups and other groups in the UK.
- UK groups and other groups in at least two Member States of the EU.
- UK groups and groups outside the EU which are organised according to the LEADER approach.

Action 3 – networking with other local action groups and other rural development organisations. Local action groups (usually with strategies supported under Action 1) are selected on a competitive basis on the strength of their local development strategies.

LEADER+ projects may not duplicate activities funded under other structural funds or mainstream programmes. Funding is from the Guidance section of the EAGGF but is not restricted to agricultural projects. It can also be used to fund the types of projects which might otherwise be supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). DEFRA will provide one source of match funding. Match funding can come from other sources e.g. local authorities, other government departments, regional development agencies, or private sector sources. The Programme is a six-year programme ending in December 2006 but local action groups have a further two years in which projects can be completed. See:

www.ukleader.org.uk

and: www.leader.gov.uk/erdp/leader/leaderhome.htm.

Lottery funds

The National Lottery provides money for worthwhile causes to improve the environmental, cultural and sporting infrastructure of the country.

The **National Lottery Charities Board** (www.nlcb.org.uk) or **Community Fund** (www.community-fund.org.uk) distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support charities and voluntary and community groups. The **main grants programme** supports projects costing up to £60,000. The **research grants programme** is focused on medical research into a wide range of diseases and conditions and social research into current issues related to health and social well-being. The **international grants programme** funds development projects which address the causes of poverty and inequality as well as development education projects in the UK. **Awards for All** is administered through the HLF (below).

The **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** has a number of grant schemes to support projects involving the local, regional and national heritage, see www.nhmf.org.uk/index2.html. **Awards for All** provides grants between £500 and £5,000 to small community groups, usually with an annual income of less than £15,000, to involve people in their local community and bring them together to take part in a wide range of activities. The **Local Heritage Initiative** is run on behalf of HLF by the Countryside Agency. It supports a wide range of local heritage projects with grants of between £3,000 and £15,000. It helps local groups to investigate, explain and care for their local landscape, landmarks, traditions and culture. See: www.lhi.org.uk

Grants between £5,000 and £50,000 are awarded directly by HLF (under a scheme entitled 'Your Heritage') on the basis of a simple application pack. **Larger projects over £50,000** involve a more complex procedure. A **Grant Scheme for Churches and Other Places of Worship** in partnership with English Heritage is aimed at the repair and improvement of historic places of worship and targeted at communities with a particular social and economic need. The **Museums and Galleries Access Fund** helps museums and galleries bring their collections to a wider audience, especially among disadvantaged or excluded groups. Support is available to temporary and touring exhibitions, as well as for projects that enable museums and galleries to test innovative proposals to widen and develop access. The **Townscape Heritage Initiative** gives grants that help communities to regenerate the historic parts of their towns and cities. The **Urban Parks Programme** makes grants to help restore historic parks and other historic public green spaces in towns and cities.

The **New Opportunities Fund** (www.nof.org.uk) awards grants to health, education and environment designed to help urban and rural communities to understand, improve or care for their natural

environment, focusing on disadvantage. The programme includes the Countryside Agency's **Doorstep Greens** programme see www.countryside.gov.uk/activities/special/doorstepgreens/doorstepgreensol.htm, Sport England's **Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces** programme English Natures '**Wildspace**' project, RSNC's **Social, Economic and Environmental Development (SEED)** programme, BTCV's **People's Places** programme, and the Sustrans **Routes for People** initiative.

The **Millennium Commission** awards small Lottery grants (Millennium Awards) of around £2,000 to enable individuals to develop community projects. It works through over 100 Award Partners such as Groundwork and the Prince's Trust.

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Since October 1996 a tax on disposal of waste to landfill has been levied at £7 per tonne for active waste and £2 per tonne for inactive waste. The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS) is a scheme which channels a proportion of funds from this tax towards bodies with environmental objectives. This is done by permitting landfill operators to reclaim from their tax liability 90% of contributions that they make to approved environmental bodies (EBs) for projects which meet the objectives of the scheme. They may not reclaim more than 20% of their total tax liability. To qualify as an environmental body, an organisation must have at least one of the following among its objectives:

- Reclamation of contaminated land.
- Actions to prevent or mitigate pollution of land caused by a previous activity.
- Research, development, education or information about sustainable waste management.
- Provision of public parks and amenities.
- Restoration of buildings.
- Provision of financial or administrative services to other environmental bodies.

Both capital and running costs can be covered from the tax credit funds, but running costs are not expected to amount to more than 10% of the total. There are no formal annual bidding rounds; instead, environmental bodies have to approach individual landfill operators with their environmental project proposal. These are vetted by ENTRUST - the Environmental Trust Scheme Regulatory Body-which decides which schemes qualify to receive money both in terms of satisfying environmental criteria and that of not benefiting the landfill operator. Once projects are approved by ENTRUST, the landfill operator can allocate tax credit funding to the projects he chooses. The lead ministry is DTLR/Customs & Excise. See: www.entrust.org.uk

Landfill Tax rules change late in 2001/early in 2002. From this time 65% of this grant money will have to go towards sustainable waste and recycling projects. This is causing concern for countryside type projects and for the local Environment Trusts who are concerned that not enough recycling bids will be put forward.

Commercial sponsorship

A number of AONBs already receive significant help from commercial companies. Usually these are local firms and often the assistance is in the form of resources in kind. Examples include donations of building stone, making available research facilities, or sponsorship of promotional literature.

Local support groups

Several AONBs have their own local support groups. In several cases these are registered charities. In addition to providing financial resources, these groups also help to mobilise volunteers (for activities such as conservation work, wardening, interpretive walks, and office functions). They also play a very important role in public relations, often ensuring that the AONB receives favourable coverage in local press and radio.

Appendix 3: Information sources and data for AONB planning

This appendix addresses the need for data as an input to and product of the AONB planning process. It:

- Lists the range of available national and regional datasets which may be useful for AONB planning and management.
- Identifies the need to generate local information specific to the AONB.
- Considers the way in which information may be used for AONB monitoring

Relevant data is principally descriptive (often quantitative) and spatial (to a smaller scale than the AONB as a whole). It complements the mainly qualitative information on attitudes, needs and views on AONB management policies that may be gathered or formed during the participation and consultation stages of the management planning process. Management planning needs to be based on the best information available, and information is needed to judge the consequences of management. The generation of information may have a value in itself, and if it supplements existing data (for example that held by a local authority) this may assist with the acceptance and implementation of the Plan. Finally, good data is vital for monitoring the effects of management, and as an input to the process of Plan review.

Information may be either:

- Pre-existing datasets which include the AONB and can be obtained 'off the shelf' and used for AONB purposes.
- Information which is peculiar to or needs to be generated within the AONB itself.

I. 'Off the shelf' information with countrywide or regional coverage

Much spatial data relevant to AONB management already exists, ranging from species distribution and landscape types to traffic flows and household incomes (Box A3, overleaf). Data may have been produced at a variety of levels of geographic coverage (international to national to regional to local) and may cover all or part of the AONB. It may have been mapped at a variety of different scales (e.g. grid-point reference, household or landholding, to parish or ward, to district or county); and it may be available in a variety of different types (whether as paper map or digital electronic formats). Each of these considerations may raise different kinds of issues with regard to its use.

Data which is available for an area including the whole of the AONB (for example with national or regional coverage) is likely to be of most use as an input to the formulation of AONB policies, although data which is only available for particular localities within the AONB may also be useful, for example in monitoring AONB condition. The scale at which the data has been mapped or generated may be a major problem.

Box A3

Please note that this is not intended to be a complete list but is rather indicative of the range and type of information available.

Dataset	Typically obtainable from*		Format**	Notes
Boundary				
AONB	County Council	County Council	Paper/ GIS¥	CC AONB boundaries often non - definitive, digitised from paper copy. CA has definitive but low resolution (1:50,000) national set
Countryside Character Areas	Countryside Agency	Countryside Agency	GIS¥	Shapefiles
Natural Areas	English Nature	English Nature	GIS¥	
Counties, Districts, and Parishes	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey	GIS¥	Boundaries on OS map generally held as separate digitised fields
Census Enumeration Districts, electoral Wards	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey	GIS	
Rural Priority Areas (ex Rural development Areas)	Individual RPA/RDA office	Individual RPA/RDA office	GIS¥/paper	RDAs are built up of whole parishes, so can be expressed as an attribute of a parish theme
Landscape character areas	County Councils/AONB unit	County Councils/AONB unit	paper/GIS¥	
Conservation Areas	District Councils	District Councils	paper/ GIS	
Local Gaps/Strategic Gaps	County Councils	County Councils	GIS	Gaps are a planning device aimed at preventing the merging of adjacent settlements
Historical				
1801-1901 Population census	Public Record Office/local authority record office. 1901 data will be available on the PRO website from 1/1/2002. 1881 data available on CD-ROM from Church of the Latter Day Saints	Public Record Office/local authority record office. 1901 data will be available on the PRO website from 1/1/2002. 1881 data available on CD-ROM from Church of the Latter Day Saints	Microfilm/C D-ROM	Full data of decennial census available following elapse of 100 years. Summary data and statistics frequently available at local authority record offices
c.1840 tithe survey	County Council Record Offices	County Council Record Offices	Paper	First comprehensive large-scale mapping, with landownership, occupation, use and fieldname data in accompanying apportionment
Ordnance Survey Epoch 1-6 mapping	Various, but especially county councils	Various, but especially county councils	Paper/.tif	Digital Landmark data available for 25" 1st series
1910 Inland Revenue Survey	Public Record Office	Public Record Office	Paper	Lloyd George's 'New Domesday': comprehensive map-based survey of landholding
1941-3 National Farm Survey	Public Record Office	Public Record Office	Paper	Second World War survey of farm practice and landholding. More farming information than 1910 IR survey, but excludes woodland
Historic Landscape Assessment	County Council	County Council	GIS	It is planned that all counties will eventually be covered although only a minority have undertaken such surveys to date

Dataset	Typically obtainable from*		Format**	Notes
Physical				
1/50,000 Ordnance Survey mapping	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey	.tif	Colour raster data, geo-registered	
1/10,000 Ordnance Survey mapping		.tif	B&W raster data, geo-registered	
1:2500 Ordnance Survey Landline mapping		GIS	Usually supplied in AIB format	
Contours			(OS 1/5000)	
Digital Terrain Model	Ordnance Survey	GIS	Ordnance Survey LandForm Profile data supplied as .dxf files with points at 10m	
Landsat TM Satellite Imagery	Infoterra Ltd		A variety of other data including IKONOS satellite data (Carterra) are available with resolutions down to a few metres, which can be input direct to GIS	
Aerial photographs	Various		Flights undertaken in the 1940s may be available through EH or County Council archives. Many standard sets are available for recent years, including false-colour infra-red which is of value for land cover monitoring	
Millennium Map	getmapping.com/County Councils	.tif		
Land Cover Map 1990	Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	.acs	25m grid cover derived from analysis of satellite imagery Requires costly spatial analyst extension to ArcView	
Land Cover Map 2000	DEFRA/ Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	¥ (planned)	Parcel-based cover derived from analysis of satellite imagery. Available from October 2001	
Geology	British Geological Survey	GIS	Solid and drift editions available. 1:50,000 data is perhaps the most relevant to AONBs	
Soils	Various, including /Soil Survey and Land Research Centre	GIS/paper	NATMAP100 is the finest resolution (100m) digital national Land Research coverage, but more detailed soil surveys are available albeit with less comprehensive coverage	
Water – rivers and catchments	Environment Agency	GIS	Water Catchments; Water Tributary Catchments; and Flood Defence Main Rivers (data from Centre for Ecology and Hydrology)	
Water– flood plains	Environment Agency	GIS	Section 24 conjectural and recorded (flood prone) areas	
National Inventory of Woods & Trees	Forestry Research	GIS		

* see Appendix 6 Useful organisations and addresses. The owner/ originator of the data is indicated in bold. Most datasets are copyright of the owner and may only be used with permission

** See Appendix 3 for more on GIS and data types

¥ To be available via MAGIC

Dataset	Typically obtainable from*		Format**	Notes
Designated sites and environmental				
National Nature Reserves	English Nature		GIS#	
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	English Nature		GIS#	
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	English Nature		GIS#	
Special Protection Areas	English Nature		GIS#	
RAMSAR sites	English Nature		GIS#	
Local Nature Reserves	County Councils		GIS	
Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs)	County Councils		GIS	
Common Land	DEFRA		GIS#	
Community Forests	Forestry Commission		GIS#	Part only
National Trust landholding	National Trust/ Ordnance Survey		GIS/ paper	OS maps incomplete, mainly access sites NT holdings not fully digitised
Country Parks	County Councils		Paper/GIS	
Habitat survey (Phase 1/ Phase 2)	County Councils/ Local Record Centres		GIS	
National Vegetation Classification (NVC)	Local records Centres, English Nature			NVC data complete for SSSIs (EN), fragmentary elsewhere
Woodland cover	Forestry Commission		GIS	Held at district level as well as centrally
Ancient Woodland	English Nature		GIS#	Not all of the national coverage is available as shapefiles
Verges (designated)	County Councils		GIS	
Village Greens	DEFRA		GIS	
Woodland Trust sites	DEFRA		GIS	
Species data	Local Record Centres			Data accessibility a major issue - many rely on paper records
Cultural heritage				
Listed Buildings	English Heritage			
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	English Heritage			
Sites and Monuments Record	County Councils			
Archaeologically sensitive areas	County Councils		GIS	
Historic Battlefields	County Councils/ English Heritage		GIS#	

Dataset	Typically obtainable from*		Format**	Notes
Agri-environmental				
Agricultural Land Classification	DEFRA		GIS	
Agricultural Land Use/ Land Practice databases	ADAS		GIS	1km resolution. Source data from 1970, 1980 and 1995
Countryside Stewardship Target Areas	DEFRA		GIS#	
Countryside Stewardship Agreement data	DEFRA		GIS#	Early schemes less well defined, boundary agreements available but not the prescription types per land parcel
Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries	DEFRA		GIS	
June Census data (annual agricultural land use, landholding, cropping, stocking, and employment data)	DEFRA		.xls	Source data can be cut by DEFRA to AONB boundary, and finer still. Too small an area (e.g. parish) will mean that much data is withheld for reasons of confidentiality
Socio-economic				
Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000	DLTR/local authorities/National Statistics		.xls	Different local authorities use this ward-level data in different ways: if AONB crosses multiple authorities, it may prove simpler to download data from DEFRA (.xls file) and link to ward coverage
Population Census (decennial)	National Statistics/local authorities		GIS/SASPAC	1991 data most easily available. Data can be broken down to enumeration district although with 10% sample data, parish level is more reliable
Transport				
Bus routes	County Council		GIS	
Bus stops			GIS	
Railways	County Councils/ Ordnance Survey		GIS#	
Railway stations			GIS	
Recreation and tourism				
Overnight stays, facility visits	Tourist Board			
Day visits	UKDVS			
Access Land	County Council			Currently being collated by Countryside Agency
Stewardship Access	DEFRA			Access areas and permissive paths
Rights of Way	County Council		GIS	
Bridleways			GIS	

* see Appendix 6 Useful organisations and addresses. The owner/ originator of the data is indicated in bold. Most datasets are copyright of the owner and may only be used with permission

** See Appendix 3 for more on GIS and data types

‡ To be available via MAGIC

In general the smaller the 'grain size' the easier it is to 'cut' it to AONB boundaries or to particular character areas within the AONB, and the more useful the data is likely to be for both planning and monitoring purposes. However small scale data - for example that gathered at the level of the individual household or property (such as agricultural census data) may not be available in 'raw' form. In some cases AONB unit staff may be able to persuade the supplying organisation to 'cut' data at desired boundaries - either those of the whole AONB or (usually more usefully) at a lower level defined by the AONB itself. This may be obligatory for supplying organisations where the raw source data is confidential. For example the DEFRA (ex MAFF) Agricultural June Census data is collected on a farm-by farm basis and cannot be released in its raw form. However, small area aggregate data cut to the AONB boundary or to sub-divisions of the AONB may be obtained and should prove an important source of information about agricultural activities and needs. One problem about 'cutting' data to internal boundaries is that they have to be defined before the data can be cut, whereas the raw data itself might have been useful for determining those areas.

Another problem, which may apply to all information which has been gathered at a larger scale (for example - parish or ward data) is that its boundaries may not correspond to those of the AONB or of internal areas within it. In some cases, data gathered may be peculiar to a particular local authority and therefore only available for part of an AONB (for example, the High Weald Habitat Survey does not include data for East Sussex).

The form in which data is available may raise other issues. Much information is still available principally as paper maps or in tabular form. An example of this is that AONB boundaries themselves are still defined most precisely on paper maps from which they have been digitised by individual county councils. Although one of the aims of the MAGIC project (see Box A3i) is to provide a definitive dataset of AONB boundaries for England, these are currently available at a comparatively low resolution (1:50,000) and thus may be subject to an error of several metres when translated onto the ground. Digitised data is required for use with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) systems and this may come in a variety of forms (see Appendix 4 on page 104).

In all cases it is important that care is taken with regard to the reliability attributed to data and how it is used. On-site verification or 'ground truthing' against field surveys may be necessary. The way in which information has been collected is important. Local tourist board statistics are derived principally from hotel & facility returns and may show very different patterns of visitor behaviour from those of the United Kingdom Day Visits Survey. Social, economic and other data may be interpreted in different ways and needs always to be understood in the context of local circumstances. For example - a high

Box A3i Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) is a project intended to provide a 'onestop' shared data resource on rural schemes and designations for England. Its objectives are to:

- Provide a definitive source of major datasets.
- Increase access to information to a wide range of organisations.

Information will be accessed using a web-based Geographic Information System. Project participants include the Countryside Agency, DEFRA, DTLR, English Heritage, English Nature and the Forestry Commission. Much of the information already exists in digitally mapped format suitable for use in GIS. However each organisation holds its own data, often in different formats, mapped at different scales and using different mapping units. Arrangements for sharing are ad-hoc; there is a lack of consistency, different datasets are often incompatible and there are often no agreed definitive versions. It is intended that MAGIC will provide a definitive source of rural geographic information, and will increase awareness and compatible use of GIS based data. The object is to provide better informed decision-making, opportunities for inter-agency collaboration, improved efficiency on data collection, information exchange and provision, and to tackle the problem of 'double-funding'.

Some of the datasets which MAGIC will cover include:

- Administrative areas, e.g. Counties, Districts, Parish boundaries and constituencies.
- Protected landscapes including AONBs, National Parks, Heritage Coasts, Community Forests.
- Designated sites including SSSIs, NNRs, SACs, SPAs &cSACS.
- Historic monuments and buildings.
- Non- statutory landscape designations such as Countryside Character Areas.
- Agricultural and other designations and target areas, such as ESAs, Stewardship Agreements, WES, Woodland Grants.

The different data sets will be accessible via the Web, at www.magic.gov.uk on which they can be interrogated and from which they can be downloaded. The idea is to provide on-line public access to navigation and viewing tools, including simple spatial analysis, reporting and printing. It is intended that a pilot version for user testing and development will be available in Autumn 2001, with full implementation by the project partners during March 2002. Wider partner and public participation in the site is expected after this date.

proportion of economically inactive adults may indicate a depressed economy or alternatively a particular age or class profile of local residents. This is particularly the case where data is to be used as an indicator of AONB condition. For example – it is known that the Countryside Agency indicator 'Community Vitality' is correlated with community size, but it is also likely to be related to different landscape types; the behaviour of people living in a nucleated village may be very different from those in dispersed settlements, as may be their class and income status.

Countryside Survey 2000 (CS2000) is a major audit of the countryside. It involved detailed field observations in a random sample of 1 km grid squares across Great Britain. Collection of data such as habitat types, hedgerows, plant species and freshwater invertebrates was complemented by powerful satellite imagery. The data obtained have been used to produce Land Cover Map 2000 (LCM2000), a complete land cover census for the UK. The CS 2000 website www.cs2000.org.uk gives details of how to access the results. For many applications the best tool for looking at CS2000 results is the Countryside Information System (CIS, below) which allows sample and census datasets at 1km square to be mapped and analysed.

‘One-stop shops’. National Statistics www.statistics.gov.uk provides a variety of data sets from social and economic data to land use change. The proliferation of datasets and the large number of agencies providing them has prompted other initiatives to provide single points of access to a variety of data types originating from different sources and, sometimes, also, the means to interrogate these on line. Two of these, the National Biodiversity Network and the National Land Use Database have been developed to assemble information in specific fields of interest. The Countryside Information System is a GIS based system enabling interrogation of a wide range of environmental datasets. The Multi Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC, www.magic.gov.uk), which is currently under development, will provide a definitive source of information on rural schemes and designations (see Box 3.i). Some websites provide a free and relatively easy means of access to useful information. For example the Environment Agency’s website www.environment-agency.gov.uk provides publicly available information including aerial photographs and maps of floodplain areas. Access to others sites may be restricted or involves payment of a fee and/or is subject to conditions of use.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN), www.nbn.org.uk is a project supported by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, Natural History Museum, the Wildlife Trusts, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Natural Environment Research Council, Marine Biological Association and National Federation for Biological Recording. It aims to create an information network of biodiversity data (much of it assembled by Local Record Centres) that is accessible through the Internet.

The National Land Use Database (NLUD) www.nlud.org.uk is a partnership project between DTLR, English Partnerships, Improvement and Development Agency (representing the interests of local government) and Ordnance Survey. The object is to provide central and local government with key information on land use in particular the amounts of previously developed land that may be available for redevelopment.

The Countryside Information System (CIS) www.cis-web.org.uk is a ‘one-stop’ source of countryside data maintained by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology’s Environmental Information Centre. The starting point for use of CIS is its Environmental Catalogue. This is a hypertext list which demonstrates the scope and availability of datasets with information so that users can appreciate the usefulness (or otherwise) of specific datasets for their own purposes.

Copyright and Payment. All datasets should be assumed to be copyright unless declared otherwise. Many datasets are subject to restrictions or conditions of use. Many datasets incorporate or are

based on Ordnance Survey (OS) data which is licensed to particular users. Boundary data (which is often based on digitised OS maps) is an example of this. In the case of an AONB unit working to a local authority JAC, an existing OS or other licence is probably adequate. Conservation boards may not be so covered however and may need (like National Park Authorities) to purchase their own licenses.

European Datasets

Several organisations outside the UK supply data which may be useful to AONB planning and management. Natlan <http://natlan.eea.eu.int> (NATure/LANd cover) is an information package designed by the European Environment Agency (EEA) for viewing and distributing its information, data and applications on land cover and nature in a comprehensive and easy-to-use way for a wide public. NATLAN is developed by EEA in close collaboration with its European Topic Centres on Land Cover (ETC/LC) and Nature Conservation (ETC/NC).

Data Service <http://dataservice.eea.eu.int/dataservice>. It provides access to data sets used in EEA periodical reports which contain aggregated data, typically on a country level, with a geographical coverage of at least the 15 EU Member States. Graphs and, in the future, maps can be generated from the data sets. Information about the source of each data set and its geographical and temporal coverage is provided.

II. Original data and information specific to the AONB.

Some data sets may need to be generated 'from scratch' either by the AONB unit itself or commissioned from other sources. This may be because the type of data is itself special to the AONB, or because it is needed for some particular purpose of AONB management. The kind of data needed is likely to be determined by the landscape character, the way the landscape is used by local residents and visitors, and by features of the local economy.

Data may be based on national data where raw data has to be cut to a form specific to the AONB (as in the case of the DEFRA Agricultural June Census data). Otherwise it will need to be generated from original desk research or field survey. In the latter situation it is often the case that samples (e.g. a limited number of farms or parishes) need to be taken as representative of a larger area, such as the AONB as a whole, or of particular character areas within it. Box A3ii illustrates the range of internally generated datasets that are used for management, planning and monitoring purposes within the High Weald AONB.

Box A3ii Local datasets for the High Weald AONB Rural Characterisation Project

In addition to 'off the shelf' data the High Weald AONB GIS based rural characterisation project required data specific to the AONB that had to be generated 'from scratch' from field surveys or documentary sources.

- **Boundary data**
 - High Weald Character Areas
 - High Weald Nucleated Settlement Boundaries
 - Conservation areas (digitised local authority data only)
- **Historical and cultural data**
 - Drove roads, prehistoric tracks and Roman roads
 - Fields development 1614 - 1839 (test area only)
 - Fields development 1839 - 1910 (test area only)
 - Fields development 1910 - 2000 (test area only)
 - Dens – documented in Kent
 - Dens – surviving place names
 - Historic Building Form, Function, and Material Survey (in conservation areas across AONB)
 - Historic Boundaries (test area only)
 - Iron-working sites (mapped from Wealden Iron Research Group Data)
 - Medieval churches (across AONB: earliest documentary and architectural evidence)
 - Building development (pilot parish: buildings phased by Tithe Survey and Ordnance Survey Mapping Epochs)
 - Parkland (across AONB)
- **Physical and environmental data**
 - Climate (cross AONB)
 - Ponds (pilot parish)
 - Wildflower Meadows (across AONB and includes Low Weald)
 - Heathland (across AONB and into Low Weald)
 - Rare Species (across AONB)
 - Woodland: mapped history 1600-2001 (test area only)
- **Socio-economic data**
 - VAT-registered businesses (ward level)
 - All businesses (Address Point sub-theme across AONB)
 - Post Offices
 - Schools
 - GP surgeries
- **Landholdings**
 - Farms and landholding 2001 (across AONB: full address data)
 - Agricultural land fragmentation (pilot parish)
 - Tenure Monitoring Data (pilot parish)
 - Farmstead land use 2001 (pilot parish: farmstead envelope; residential curtilage; active agricultural yard; redundant agricultural yard; business area; equine area)
 - Non-agricultural land use 2001 (pilot parish: paddock; redundant; sport)
 - Former farm holdings 2000 (pilot parish)
 - Inland Revenue 1910 (pilot parish, AONB Unit generated from info held at Public Record Office)
 - National Farm Survey 1941 (pilot parish, AONB Unit generated from info held at Public Record Office)
 - Woodland holdings 2000 (pilot parish)
 - VAT-registered farm businesses (ward level)
 - Farmers' markets
 - Farm sales (across AONB)

Details of costs of the High Weald project may be found in Appendix 4 (Box 4i)

III. Information outputs and AONB monitoring

Monitoring AONB condition involves assessing changes through the comparison of information from different times. It is an important element of AONB management and a vital input to the Plan review. It enables the AONB team, AONB partners and others to understand how the landscape is being conserved or enhanced, how its enjoyment by the public has been secured, and how the social and economic wellbeing of local communities may have changed.

Monitoring may involve the comparison of broad datasets or repeated surveys over time ('surveillance'), and this may be facilitated by GIS techniques. More usefully, it is selective, closely related to AONB management objectives and targets, and involves the selection of indicators. Key indicators which measure the quality of an AONB or its management should be:

- Expressed in terms that the interested public can understand and relate to.
- Relevant to specific Management Plan policies and to stated management targets, and sensitive to change.
- Capable of replication to show trends and change over time and permit the identification of baselines or bench-marks.
- Applicable at a range of scales in order that data can be split down to a ward or parish level and also understood at a county, regional or national level.
- Be based on standard procedures wherever possible in order to contribute to national or regional datasets and to enable comparisons, for example with adjacent areas or with other AONBs.
- Complementary to or integrated with other indicators, including the government's published 'Quality of Life Counts' and to the Countryside Agency's 'State of the Countryside' reports.

Such 'State of the AONB indicators' may sometimes be expressed as multiple indices of AONB quality. These enable raw statistics to be presented in a robust and meaningful package, and they provide an effective input to 'State of the AONB' reports. Monitoring and reporting on progress against management objectives is defined as a core function for an AONB staff unit in the Countryside Agency's funding policy (see Appendix 2: AONB funding on page 78).

Indicators must always be appropriate to the AONB and to management objectives. However where it is possible to do so, it may be useful to link them to the Countryside Agency's State of the Countryside thematic indicators¹. These are related to DEFRA's Rural White Paper headline indicators² and Quality of Life indicators³ (Box A3iii overleaf). Most of them are currently in development, however it is likely a sufficient number will be formalised by the end of 2002 to enable some linkages with internal AONB monitoring. This will facilitate between AONB 'snapshot' comparisons as well as comparisons with national data.

1. The state of the countryside 2001, 2001, CA 61, Countryside Agency.

2. DETR. 2000. Our countryside: the future. A fair deal for rural England. Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000 CM 4909. London: The Stationery Office. See also House of Commons Select Committee, 1996 Third Report: Rural England; The Rural White Paper, vol. 1.

3. DETR. 1999. Quality of Life Counts. Indicators for sustainable development for the United Kingdom: a baseline assessment. London: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Box A3iii

Examples of Countryside Agency 'State of the Countryside' thematic indicators and Rural White Paper headline indicators

Countryside Agency State of the Countryside thematic indicator	Related DEFRA/Rural white Paper headline indicator
1. Change in countryside character	11. Change in countryside quality – including biodiversity, tranquillity, heritage and landscape character
2. Biodiversity – wild bird populations – area of ancient semi-natural woodland – extent and management of SSSIs – Biodiversity Action Plan progress against targets – Sustainable woodland management	12. Populations of farmland birds and condition of SSSIs
3. State of natural resources – rivers of good or fair quality – soil quality – air quality	13. Rivers of good or fair quality and air quality (low level ozone) in rural areas
19. How people use the countryside	14. Numbers of people using the countryside and types of visit; kind of transport; and level and type of spend
20. Public concern for the countryside	No equivalent.
6. Community vibrancy	15. Community vibrancy
7. Income levels and distribution	2. Low income: % of people in rural areas in low income bands
	10. Total income from farming and off- farm income
14. Rural mobility	5. Proportion of households in rural areas within about 10 minutes walk of a bus service
15 Market town prosperity	8. Proportion of market towns that are thriving, stable or declining (based on service provision, business activity, and employment)

Monitoring is a matter not just for the AONB unit but for all AONB partners and it should be integrated with existing data collecting procedures (and with partner's own management objectives) wherever possible. Monitoring should be seen as an integral part of the management process. This is a rapidly developing area and the focus for some interesting pilot projects such as English Nature's Lifescapes programme (Box A3iv).

Box A3iv Lifescapes

'Lifescapes' is a programme funded by English Nature aimed at integrating biodiversity with sustainable rural management. The aim is to bring different sectors of the community together, to share information and views. It is focused on four of English Nature's Natural Areas, all of which are also AONBs: The Chilterns; Suffolk Coast and Heaths; the Forest of Bowland; and the South Downs. There are no formal rules nor any fixed expectations about outputs; the aim is rather to see what nature conservation benefits can be achieved in different landscape areas. This can be assisted by providing good access to environmental data and encouraging a wide range of stakeholder involvement in debating the future of the countryside.

In the **Chilterns AONB** Natural Area targets for downland and new woodland are being explored using a GIS model developed by Oxford Brookes University. This will assist the decision-making process by examining the most effective targeting of agri-environment schemes and woodland grants. Financial assistance is being given to Local Records Centre(s) to improve efficiency and GIS capability. A study will examine the key social and economic factors operating in the area.

In the **Suffolk Coasts And Heaths** habitat data is being used to examine the way in which agrienvironmental schemes and tourism policies can contribute to the conservation of a number of key habitats – including salt marsh, reedbeds and grazing marsh which are under threat from sea level rise. The Local Record Centre will be assisted to enable environmental data to be digitised and incorporated in a GIS to develop 'opportunity maps' for habitat restoration.

The **Forest Of Bowland AONB** project aims to carry on from the EU funded 'Bowland Initiative'. Funding will be used to improve the data and the GIS held by the Local Record Centre and assist landscape planning. Ecological advisory services will be maintained as part of the project, feeding into agri-environment scheme targeting. A pro-active approach will be taken to achieve wider landscape benefits.

The **South Downs** Lifescapes Project is at an early stage but will focus on linking English Nature's interests with those of the Countryside Agency and the South Downs Conservation Board as the area moves towards designation as a National Park. The restoration and recreation of downland is a key aspect of planning for the future. Funding for the local Biological Records Centre will provide a GIS capability linking species information with existing PRIMAVERA datasets (see Appendix 4: Information technology in AONB management on page 104).

Appendix 4: Information technology in AONB management

This appendix aims to illustrate the range of applications of information technology (IT) in AONB planning and management. These go well beyond the now well established 'office' PC- based applications of multi-purpose word-processing, databases and spreadsheets. Some AONB units now have sophisticated facilities, including desk-top publishing (DTP) which enables them to produce their own promotional material. This appendix discusses three applications which illustrate a rapidly changing area of IT application within AONBs:

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- The Internet/World Wide Web (Web).
- Planning and project management systems.

In all this it is important to remember that no IT applications should obscure or hinder the most effective use of information technology – picking up the telephone and speaking to people (and being available to people when they phone in). The most effective use of IT can sometimes be to abandon it – to go out to meet the people themselves, including local residents and visitors.

I. Geographical Information Systems

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are software used to store, manipulate and display spatial information of many sorts. Examples of such data are landscape types, contours, soil types, archaeological remains, electricity cables, social and economic data. An excellent introduction to GIS, The GIS files can be found on the Ordnance Survey's website at www.ordsvy.gov.uk. GIS systems range from relatively low price and simple map management systems and desk-top mapping programmes to fully-fledged GIS which can be used very flexibly for analysis, modelling and display of spatial data. Many GIS systems can now be used on personal computers. Today all UK National Park Authorities, virtually all county councils and a large proportion of district councils use GIS. A number of AONB units have already also implemented GIS systems for themselves, independently of their parent local authorities.

At its simplest, GIS can be used to prepare maps, but there are many other uses in protected landscape management and management planning. One example of this is its use as a predictive tool to demonstrate the consequences of implementing particular management policies. The principal uses of GIS within an AONB unit are likely to be:

- Data storage (in a compact and accessible form).
- Data capture (e.g. from maps, photographs, or data entered on pre-existing maps).
- Integration of data (within a consistent spatial structure).

- Manipulation and analysis of data (statistically and spatially).
- Visualisation of data (on screen and in hard copy, in a variety of formats).

Those AONB units which have implemented GIS systems have done so for different reasons and show a diversity of different approaches. A number of studies (for example – the Chiltern Hills AONB¹ have demonstrated its relevance to the process of landscape assessment for management planning purposes. One of these, the Habitat Capability Model (based at Oxford Brookes University) has assessed the potential for improved grassland to be restored to chalk downland or to beech forest. In the High Weald AONB unit, a GIS system is being used to explore the complexities of landscape character. This involves a good deal of locally generated historical data and field survey information (see Appendix 3 on page 91) as well as ‘off the shelf’ data. The costs and benefits of this project are summarised in Box A4, below.

Box A4 The High Weald AONB Rural Characterisation Project

High Weald AONB has appointed a ‘Rural Character Adviser’. One focus of the Adviser’s work is to help develop policies for the forthcoming revision of the AONB Management Plan, based on sound environmental, social, economic, and historical data. This involves the generation of relevant information specific to the AONB itself, as well as accessing available national and regional datasets. Much of this AONB-specific data (Box 3ii) is generated through original fieldwork including an intensive farm-by-farm survey of a sample parish (Ticehurst). Much of the data – local and national – is stored on a GIS which is used intensively for analysis purposes and for studying the implications of different policy initiatives.

Costs

- 1 person (core funded)
- 1 research assistant for pilot project (4 months, 50% Countryside Agency, and 50% local authority)
- IT – desktop PC, Psion (data gathering), plotter, ArcView GIS software (£5k)
- Data – commercial datasets (e.g. geological data)

Benefits

- Effective dataset storage and access
- Relevant local data to complement standard datasets
- Ability to manipulate and interrogate different types of datasets
- Effective visual communication of character descriptions and policy implications

The Sussex Downs Conservation Board has a sophisticated GIS system which has taken a rather different approach to that of the High Weald, in part related to the future designation of the area as a national park. The system includes three-dimensional visualisation; one use of which is to explore the landscape impact of development proposals, and of the application of management policies. This has included a number of separate sub-projects, which have explored applications of GIS in different contexts (Box A4i).

Much national and regional data is already available in a form suitable for use in GIS (see Appendix 3 Table A3i on page 97). Other data may need to be specially prepared. For example many local

1. Lee, J T, M J Elton, and S Thompson, 1999: “The role of GIS in landscape assessment: using land-use-based criteria for an area of the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” Land Use Policy 16(1) pp 23-32.

Box A4i GIS Application in the South Downs

PRIMAVERA (Park Resources Information Management Via Environmental Remotely-sensed data Analysis) was an EU (Framework 4, Environment and Climate Programme) funded GIS project (1998-2000) focused on sustainable management of national parks and other protected landscapes in Europe. The South Downs was one of four pilot areas, the other sites being in Italy and Greece. The UK partner to the Sussex Downs Conservation Board was the University of Nottingham.

The project aim was to develop methods for producing and handling information relevant to the management of environmental issues in these areas. A particular concern was to examine how remotely sensed data could be used alongside other geographical information, and what kinds of integrated data products and services could be developed around them.

The first phase of the Project made an assessment of user needs. This was followed by the development of pilot systems and procedures. The work programme produced a number of different GIS products developed around the needs of the end user in each protected area. The project focused on 3 key environmental themes in the Sussex Downs AONB:

- Access and recreation
- Development pressure
- Landuse Change

The information handling problems that arise from such a study include:

- The integrating of data from a range of different agencies and an understanding of issues of data quality
- The development of techniques for handling information that will help to summarise these data in ways that are relevant to the needs of policy customers
- The development of modelling techniques to enable scenarios of change to be explored for the purposes of consultation, policy development and policy appraisal

The results of the PRIMAVERA project have helped the Board to develop an integrated body of environmental information about the AONB and to create a framework in which these data can be used in more open and cost effective ways. The project has made an important contribution to the sustainable management of the landscapes of the area. The lessons learned from the work are also relevant to the sustainable management of the wider countryside throughout Europe². (see: www.geog.nottingham.ac.uk/~wale/primavera.html).

A separate but related programme, the **South Downs Ecological Mapping** programme was an ecological mapping programme run by Brighton University Digital mapping Unit supported by East and West Sussex County Council, the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency, and the Sussex Wildlife Trust. This aimed to integrate landscape ecology and GIS in the context of landscape and environmental management on the Sussex South Downs. The aim was to identify and evaluate spatially dependent factors within the environmental and ecological landscape of the South Downs. A comprehensive GIS database has been created which holds environmental data from the landscape scale to the community and species level. With the addition of English Nature species data sets, the GIS database held at the University of Brighton is claimed to be the most comprehensive of its type in the UK. It has enabled the project team to address a range of theoretical and practical issues in ecology and landscape management science. In particular, a GIS-based Habitat Suitability Model has been developed for application within biodiversity monitoring and site selection for targeted calcareous grassland habitat restoration on the South Downs (see: www.vicorg.uk/edu/welcome.htm).

authorities are currently working to systems based on AONB boundaries that are digitised from paper maps. This may lead to (occasionally critical) inaccuracies in the precise (spatial or other) detail of the data. When more than one county council is involved there may be discrepancies in data, or particular kinds of data may be available for only part of the AONB. All data acquisition has some cost and the need to digitise data may add to this. There is often a trade-off between cost and utility. Scanning images is quick and cheap but the (more laborious and costly) digitisation of vector data may produce more useable information. Initiatives such MAGIC (the Multi-Agency

2. Murdock, A P, R H Haines-Young, C Watkins, and C L Wale, 1999: "Planning for Access: using GIS to support countryside policy in the Sussex Downs AONB" in Association for Geographic Information Conference GIS 99 pp. 1-5.

Geographic Information for the Countryside project, see Appendix 3 on page 91) are likely both to increase the quantity and utility of GIS ready information as well as access to it.

The hardware and software costs of GIS implementation are progressively reduced as the technology itself improves. Much of the publicly available data may also often be obtained for no cost through the relevant government agency. Where commercial copyright is concerned, the licence held by the parent local authority will generally permit its use by the AONB. Conservation boards will need to check for every data source if they need a license. The principal cost is that of the AONB unit staff member who operates the system, plus that of collecting what local data may be necessary.

The implementation of a GIS system which is independent of that of the local authority may have a number of advantages. In the first place the requirements of the AONB unit for integrated management applications may be different from that of the local authority. The output of an effective GIS system can assist the AONB unit in securing acceptance and implementation of AONB policies both by the relevant local authorities and other AONB partners. Finally, GIS can provide an effective basis for monitoring the AONB and the effectiveness of management.

One issue which has already been revealed with respect to National Parks is that different AONBs are likely to implement different GIS systems and as yet there has been no significant attempt to generate common standards. The most common systems in use are ArcView/ ArcInfo (the majority) and Mapinfo. Data exchange between these systems is not technically difficult should AONB teams wish to exchange information, either between themselves or with local authority systems. Rather more intractable problems arise as a consequence of the lack of consistent data standards. It is likely that as common data standards and protocols emerge, it will be possible to develop consistent and coherent 'State of the AONB' indicators. This will allow comparisons to be made between different AONBs and will link AONB monitoring to national indicators (see Appendix 3 on page 91).

II. The Web

The Web is not just a source of information for AONB managers in preparing and implementing the AONB Plan (see Appendices 3, 4 and 5: Sources of information for AONB planning, Useful publications and Useful organisations & addresses). It is also a powerful means of communicating with others, particularly about the purposes of the AONB and its management. E-government means that more inputs to planning should over time be available from the web. It also means that wherever appropriate, AONB units should consider using the web not just as a means of providing what they consider to be appropriate visitor information, but of opening all their activities to public scrutiny. If it is

possible that documents (such as the AONB Management Plan) might be placed on the Web, it is probably worth thinking about this at an early stage. For example – A4 documents formatted in landscape (rather than portrait) layout are easier to read on-screen when produced facsimile in a single view and issues of layout and readability become critical.

Some AONBs have their own websites. The **East Hampshire Joint Advisory Committee** and **Sussex Downs Conservation Board** have a joint **South Downs Virtual Information Centre** (at www.vic.org.uk). This has a 'partner page' with links to the web pages of all the AONB JAC partners, 'what's new' introductory page with details on books and other publications, downloadable fact-sheets, school exercises, photographs of the South Downs, including those from the 'Jigsaw Project' (Box A4.ii).

Box A4ii The South Downs Jigsaw Project

As part of the Millennium celebrations, the Sussex Downs Conservation Board produced a Millennium Jigsaw Project in partnership with all the parishes in the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Each parish was asked to photograph sites of interest or particular significance. The result was over 350 pages and a huge wall display documenting the life and landscape of the region. The Jigsaw is an outstanding record of the local area in the year 2000, a snapshot for history but also a living testament to the views and perceptions of local residents. The results have now been put onto the South Downs Virtual Information Centre. A 'clickbox' enables website visitors to select and view photographic images of all the South Downs parishes in the Jigsaw project, and to find out where the Jigsaw will be next on display (at www.vic.org.uk/pro/themeswelcome.htm).

The **High Weald AONB** website (at www.highweald.org) greets the visitor with animated butterflies. Website contents include a wealth of information on the AONB itself, and on its management (including the membership of the JAC and the High Weald AONB Forum) and contact details for the AONB unit. In addition there are pages promoting the marketing of local produce, and also information for those who wish to volunteer for work within the AONB, giving details of opportunities for practical conservation work and assistance in the AONB unit office. Other AONBs have varying degrees of prominence on the websites of their local authorities. This ranges from a single page for the **Cotswolds AONB Partnership** (on www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/conservation/tucd17.htm) to more detailed information (e.g. for the **Mendip Hills AONB** on www.somerset.gov.uk/mendip).

One use of the Web can be to make the AONB Management Plan itself readily accessible. The **North Pennines AONB** website (www.northpennines.org.uk) presents the whole AONB Management Plan on pages which can be downloaded and consulted by anyone. The **Forest of Bowland AONB** features on the Lancashire County Council's website (at www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/cs/htm/nfbman.htm) and the AONB's Action Plan has also been published on the web (on www.lancsenvironment.com/strategies/bowlandactionplan/bapcover.htm) as part of a pilot project funded by Lancashire County Council and the Countryside Agency.

The Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AAONB) has a website which acts as a portal to individual AONBs (www.aonb.org.uk).

Although the Web has great advantages as a communications medium, it is important to be aware of its limitations. Many local residents and potential visitors from outside the AONB do not have computers. Although web pages can be downloaded they are an unsuitable format for taking into the field and they therefore need to be supplemented by printed information, available locally and also by post. It is also important that attention is given to the costs of maintaining a website. The content of every web page needs to be regularly reviewed and if necessary updated, otherwise people may be given misleading information. Installing and maintaining a website takes time and skill. Setting up may effectively be done by contractors but day-to-day management is best undertaken by training up a nominated individual within the AONB unit.

III. Plan and project management

AONB management planning requires paperwork, drafting and redrafting, record keeping and financial accounting. Specific applications include data collection and field recording. Computers provide an invaluable tool for doing these jobs.

Strategy planning, in particular the identification of objectives and methods, is a complex process. A number of attempts have been made to model the decision making process, including ones using Information Technology. These may have some potential in the future for conservation sites (such as closed nature reserves) which are directly managed by a single authority. However they have little relevance to management planning for multi-use multipurpose conservation landscapes such as AONBs where management 'on the ground' is via many different individual landowners and consultation and consensus is critical.

Action Plans, by contrast, may include procedures which are well suited to computer based systems. A major problem with management is that task (or project) planning and recording can be haphazard and very time consuming. Monitoring and recording may be dependant on the time (and sometimes the memory) of the individual members of the AONB unit and partnership. Computers provide, at least in principle, an alternative to paper systems. They also have the potential to automate many of the administrative processes involved, particularly with respect to financial planning and reporting. Standard software tools include commercially available programs such as Microsoft Project. These are widely used by private companies, by consultants and by voluntary organisations as well as by local authorities.

Several organisations (for example the National Trust) have developed their own systems for project management and planning³. Local authorities also have also used task management systems for a number of years. At the time of writing only one 'tailored' system is commercially marketed to managers of protected landscapes such as AONBs, the Conservation Management System (CMS, see Box A4iii).

It is important to remember that like all IT applications, project management and planning systems have their costs as well as benefits. Any AONB unit considering adopting such a system should consult with existing users as to the relative advantages and disadvantages of doing so.

Box A4iii The Conservation Management System (CMS)

CMS is a management planning system available from the CMS Partnership, a not-for-profit consortium including the Countryside Council for Wales and other major UK conservation organisations. It was originally launched in 1993 as a project planning and recording system for management on nature conservation sites. Subsequently, CMS has been adapted and refined to incorporate provisions for managing archaeological, recreational and other landscape features, and for use on protected landscapes such as AONBs. It has been adopted as an adjunct to the management plan in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, and the Forest of Bowland AONB are transferring their Action Plan onto CMS in order to facilitate management record keeping, monitoring, and revision/updating.

A free demonstration of CMS may be downloaded from www.cmstp.co.uk. The 'core' of the CMS system is a project database that is compiled and indexed using standard project codes. This allows data to be manipulated in many ways, for example to produce instructions (in the form of completed printed project planning forms) for the execution of individual projects. It also provides a mechanism for recording completed projects and for producing work programmes, budgets and annual reports. An add-on mapping facility based on MapInfo is available (see) and data can be transferred into a range of other formats (ArcInfo, DXF, or within a document).

The project database is linked to management methods, and via methods to objectives. This means that as soon as objectives have been determined, the remainder of the management plan can be written using the CMS system. The software offers a range of optional levels and fields for users to select. However, effective use of any database management system for management planning and recording requires procedures to be adapted significantly. In particular, realisation of the benefits of CMS for project management and recording requires regular input of information, including records of projects as they are completed. This enables action monitoring to be carried out in a systematic way. In addition, to take advantage of some of the system facilities for monitoring condition, it is necessary to link objectives to specific and measurable outcomes. This includes establishing the range of values (sometimes called limits of acceptable change, or LAC) around a target level within which variations need not cause concern. This means that whilst the full facilities of CMS may be useful in respect of those aspects of the action plan which fall directly to the AONB team, they may not be appropriate to AONB partners. Most experience of CMS to date has been limited to nature conservation sites and here, where it has been implemented successfully, CMS has been found to facilitate a significant increase in the efficiency and quality of management. The application of such management systems in protected landscapes such as AONBs is still at an early stage.

3. Clarke, Richard, 1997: "Project Management in Protected Areas: A Tale of Two Systems" International Journal of Project Management 15(4) August pp 245-53.

Appendix 5: Useful publications

This appendix lists some publications that may prove useful to those preparing or using AONB Management Plans.

Publications fall into two broad types:

- Those that are available on printed paper (books, articles &c). In most cases these may be bought through bookshops or over the Web, or ordered through libraries. Where an asterisk (*) appears after the publisher this indicates that the publication may be ordered direct by post from the address given at the end of this appendix.
- Those that are available in electronic form on the Internet. Information on a variety of topics may often be accessed from the same website. Some useful internet addresses are given in Appendix 6: Useful organisations & addresses on page 117.

Some publications are available in both printed paper and electronic (http) formats.

The web provides a useful means of searching for publications (paper and electronic) on any topic. For example, the Countryside Agency publications catalogue is available 'on line' at www.countryside.gov.uk/information/publications. Commercial on-line bookshops (e.g. www.amazon.com or www.bol.com) provide literature search facilities. 'Search engines' such as www.google.com may be used to locate web addresses on any topic.

Publications specific to AONBs

- Holdaway, Edward, and Gerald Smart (2001) **Landscapes at Risk: The Future of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty** E & FN Spon. A scholarly survey of the origins, history and present status of AONBs, which went to press just as CRoW was going through Parliament.
- Countryside Agency 2001, **AONB Management Plans A guide**. Countryside Agency, CA 23. The Countryside Agency's advice to AONB teams, partnerships, local authorities and Conservation Boards on the preparation and use of Management Plans.
- Countryside Agency 2001, **AONBs: A guide for AONB partnership members**. Countryside Agency, CA 24. The general guide to purposes of AONB designations and how to manage them effectively.
- Countryside Agency (2000) **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: providing for the future**. Countryside Agency, CCWP 8. The Agency's policy paper on AONBs, which provided some of the 'official' input to CRoW.
- David Tyldesley and Associates(2000) **Review of Management Plans in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales** Edinburgh: Scottish Natural Heritage SNH Review no. 135. A commissioned background study which contains some useful information.

Legal obligations and policy guidance

- Acts of Parliament. Texts of Acts of Parliament and other legal documents are published by the Stationery Office Ltd (Tel: 0870 600 5522; www.clickTSO.com). Those produced since 1988 may also be read and downloaded from the Web on: www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk.
- Bell, Stuart and McGillivray, Donald (2000) **Environmental Law** Blackstone Press. One of the best of a number of textbooks on UK environmental law, published just before CroW.
- Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (2001) **Preparing Community Strategies; Government Guidance to Local Authorities** DETR. The official guidance on Community Strategies.
- **Planning Policy Guidance 7: The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development** ISBN 0-11-753370-X Price: £10.00. Sets out the Government's policies on planning in National Parks and AONBs.
- **Planning policy guidance PPG 9 Nature Conservation** 1994 ISBN 0117527874. Price: £8.50. Guidance on the application of planning procedures where nature conservation issues are involved, but also a good deal of very useful information about conservation designations (such as SSSIs) and good summaries of the major international conventions.
- **Planning policy guidance PPG 16. Archaeology and planning** 1990 ISBN 011752353. Price: £9.50. Guidance on the application of planning procedures where archaeological issues are involved, and also some useful information on archaeological evaluation and management.
- **Journal of Planning and Environmental Law** 13 x pa, £140 pa. This is one of a number of hugely expensive refereed 'academic' journals, which aims to supply up-to-date critical analyses of legal matters. This one is published by Sweet and Maxwell (<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/juk/journals/jpel.html>).
- **Planning (for the built and natural environment)** weekly, £75pa. The 'newspaper' of the Royal Town Planning Institute and probably better value for news and views. Its website, www.planning.haynet.com (free) provides a good source of current planning news.
- **Town and Country Planning** monthly, £84pa, The magazine of the Town and Country Planning Association. Its website: www.tcpa.org.uk provides a catalogue of other TCPA publications.

Conserving landscape, natural and cultural resources

- Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2001) **Landscape Character Assessment Guidance**. The essential Countryside Agency guidance, on which all future landscape character assessment will be based.

- Darvill, Timothy (1987) **Ancient Monuments in the Countryside an archaeological management review**. English Heritage. A comprehensive but accessible review of management issues for archaeological remains and historic landscapes.
- English Heritage (1995) **Repair and Restoration Schemes for Historic Parks and Gardens** (unpublished, available from English Heritage) Management planning guidance for archaeological and cultural sites.
- Sutherland, William J; Hill, David A (1995) **Managing Habitats for Conservation**. Cambridge University Press. An excellent survey of different UK habitat types, their ecology and management for conservation.
- **ECOS** quarterly, £19 pa from BANC Membership Services, Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton, NN3 8BE, the journal of the British Association of Nature Conservationists www.banc.org.uk. Background and opinion on conservation politics, by turns critical/subversive and new age/ woolly, but never dull.
- **British Wildlife** bi-monthly, £18.95 pa from Subscriptions Dept, British Wildlife Publishing, Lower Barn, Rooks Farm, Rotherwick, Hook, Hants RG27 9BG. www.britishwildlife.com From identifying dragonflies to conserving flower-rich meadows, with excellent reviews of current UK legislation and policy changes from Sue Everett and humour from Peter Marren.
- **CPRE Voice** quarterly is one of several journals or newsletters of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP (msp £17.50pa) www.cpre.org.uk others include **Planning Update** - a briefing on planning matters.
- **Enact** quarterly, £12 pa from Lower Barn, Rooks Farm, Rotherwick, Hook, Hampshire RG27 9BG, is **English Nature's magazine** on (mainly practical) habitat management issues, and complements the more newsy English Nature Magazine 6 x pa, free, from English Nature, Northminster House Peterborough Cambridgeshire, PE1 1UA, www.english-nature.gov.uk.
- **Environment Action** quarterly, free, from the Environment Agency, Block 2, Government Buildings, Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 6EZ. The EA's www.environment-agency.gov.uk current news on air and water quality, toxins, waste disposal, biodiversity, &c.
- **European Nature** 2-3 times pa, free, from the ECNC, PO Box 1352, 5004, BJ Tilburg, the Netherlands, The European Centre for Nature Conservation's (www.ecnc.nl) magazine on the interface of policy and science focussing on biodiversity policy in a European context.
- **Landlines** £1 monthly newsletter of the Landscape Design Trust www.landscape.co.uk focuses on landscape design in rural and urban settings. Its sibling **Landlines Tech** £2.50 monthly deals with building materials &c and its cousin, **Landscape Design** £4.00, 10x p.a., is the (academic) journal of the Landscape Institute www.l-i.org.uk.

- **Landscape Research** 4x pa, £80 pa is the journal of the **Landscape Research Group** and combines original research papers with reflective critiques of landscape practice. With Local Environment below, it is one of the (costly but relevant) refereed 'academic' journals published by Carfax/ Taylor and Francis (www.tandf.co.uk).
- **Ranger** quarterly, £3 (or join the CMA, CMA Administration, Writtle College, Lordship Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR) The Ranger is the journal of the Countryside Management Association www.countryside-management.org.uk of especial interest to existing and aspiring rangers and wardens.

Helping people to enjoy the countryside

- Countryside Commission (1994) **Delivering Countryside Information A Practical Guide for Countryside Managers** (CCP 447) Countryside Commission. Guidance on signage, publications, promotion.
- Countryside Commission (1997): **Countryside Recreation Development; guidelines for appraisal** Countryside Commission. Aimed at recreation managers, a good introduction.
- Elson, Martin J; Heaney, Donna; Reynolds, Georgina (eds.) (1995) **Good practice in the planning and management of sport and active recreation in the countryside**. Sports Council and Countryside Commission. A comprehensive text on management issues for sporting and recreational sites.
- Scottish Natural Heritage (1996) **Visitor Centres: A practical guide to planning, design and operation**. Scottish Natural Heritage. As it says, a good practical guide.
- **Countryside Recreation** quarterly, free, from Network Manager, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WA. The journal of the Countryside Recreation Network www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk. It focuses on research, liaison and communication to spread good practice on issues related to rural recreation in the UK.
- **Interpretation Journal** quarterly journal of the Association for Heritage Interpretation, Cruachan, Tayinloan, Tarbert, PA29 6XF. £25pa (associate). The AHI (www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk) used to be called the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage (SIBH) and that is what it seeks to foster.
- **Rambler** quarterly journal of the Rambler's Association 2nd floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW www.ramblers.org.uk. Mainly aimed at 'users' but some good policy articles, and links with campaigning issues.

Working for and with people

- Wates, Nick (2000), **The Community Planning Handbook** published by Earthscan in association with the Urban Design Group, the Prince's Foundation, and South Bank University. A good introduction to participative techniques.
- **Countryside Focus** bi-monthly, free, from Countryside Agency Publications PO Box 125, Wetherby, LS23 7EP www.countryside.gov.uk. The Countryside Agency newspaper, current issues in landscape conservation, recreation and access, and sustainable rural development.

Land management

- Richard Soffe (1995) **The Agricultural Notebook** Blackwell Science (UK) Many practising farmers use this as their reference 'bible'. Andrews, John; Rebane, Michael (1994) **Farming and Wildlife: A practical handbook for the management, restoration and creation of wildlife habitats on farmland.** Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sandy, Beds. An excellent practical handbook.

Social and economic well-being

- Caroline Clarke (1999) **Effective Partnerships For Voluntary and Community Groups** Civic Trust. Focuses on principles as well as techniques.
- **Civic Focus** quarterly £20. Magazine of the Civic Trust www.civictrust.org.uk Focus on regeneration of towns and villages, increasingly focusing on partnerships and civic action.
- **Local Environment** 4x pa, £46 pa Focuses on local economic, social and environmental policy, politics and action, and with Landscape Research above, is probably the most relevant of a number of refereed 'academic' journals published by Carfax/ Taylor and Francis (www.tandf.co.uk).
- **Rural Digest**, bimonthly, from ACRE offices, Somerford Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1TW. Action with Communities in Rural England www.acre.org.uk is the umbrella organisation of the county based Rural Community Councils, who work to improve the quality of life of local communities, and particularly of disadvantaged people, in rural England.

Grants, financial planning and costing

- Derek Lovejoy Partnership; Davis Langdon & Everest (2001) **Spon's Landscape and External Works Price Book.** E & F N Spon An annual publication, useful when budgeting or putting work out to tender.
- Derek Lovejoy Partnership (1996) **Spon's Landscape Handbook.** E & F N Spon. This gives specifications for wide range of landscape operations.

- Wye College Department of Agriculture (1996) **Farm Management Pocketbook**. University of London Wye College, Wye, Kent. Typical prices for agricultural produce and costs for farm operations.

Addresses for obtaining Countryside Agency publications direct:

- Countryside Agency publications (and those of its predecessors, the Countryside Commission and the Rural Development Agency) can be obtained from: Countryside Agency Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7EP Tel. 0870 120 6466. Fax 0870 120 6467. Minicom 0870 120 7405 (for the hard of hearing). E-mail: countryside@twoten.press.net
A publications catalogue (CA 2) is available from this address upon request. A full list of Countryside Agency and Countryside Commission publications can be found at:
www.countryside.gov.uk/information/default.htm.
Addresses from which the publications of other bodies may be obtained direct are given in Appendix 6: Useful organisations & addresses.

Appendix 6: Useful organisations & addresses

This appendix provides contact details (postal address, telephone number and website) and brief information for some of the national or international organisations that may prove useful to AONB managers. It is divided into three sections:

- Statutory agencies.
- Non-statutory (commercial and not-for-profit) organisations.
- UK branches of international organisations.

Many of the organisations listed have local branches or offices which will be the most useful point of first contact. Their contact details may be obtained from the national address and are generally also listed on the website indicated.

1. Statutory agencies

** indicates that the agency has regional or local branches which should often be the first port of call

**Department of Transport, Local Government, and the Regions (DTLR) Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU Tel: 020 7944 300 www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk	DTLR is the arm of government responsible for most local authority functions, including development planning. With other government departments, including DEFRA, below, it maintains regional Government Offices for the Regions dealing with local matters. These will often be able to give the best assistance on AONB issues.
**Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) 3-8 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH Tel: 08459 33 55 77 or 020 7270 8419 www.defra.gov.uk	DEFRA brings together the Environment Protection Group and the Wildlife and Countryside Directorate from the former DETR, all the functions of the former MAFF; and responsibility for certain animal welfare issues and hunting from the Home Office. DEFRA sponsors a number of important Non-Departmental Public Bodies, including the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency and English Nature. The DEFRA regional service centres provide advice and guidance on a range of grant schemes and initiatives.
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) 2- 4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5DH Tel: 020 7211 6200 www.culture.gov.uk	DCMS has policy responsibility for museums, galleries and libraries, the built heritage, the arts, broadcasting and the media, as well as the creative industries and the National Lottery. It has responsibility for built heritage and tourism and sport and sponsors English Heritage, the English Tourism Council and the Sports Council for England.
**Countryside Agency (CA) John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3RA Tel: 01242 521381 www.countryside.gov.uk	The CA's statutory purpose is to conserve and enhance the countryside, to promote social equity and economic opportunity for the people who live there, and to help everyone, wherever they live, to enjoy it. Grants and other schemes have been developed to assist those concerned with site and landscape management. The Agency operates through 8 regional offices.

1. Statutory agencies continued...

**Environment Agency (EA) Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4UD Tel: 01454 624400 www.environment-agency.gov.uk	The EA for England and Wales was created by merging the National Rivers Authority, HM Inspectorate of Pollution, the Waste Regulation Authorities and several smaller government units and acts as a combined regulator of land, air and water. The EA's responsibilities include the management of rivers and the water environment, industrial pollution and waste disposal.
**English Nature (EN) Northminster House, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 1UA Tel: 01733 455000 www.english-nature.gov.uk	EN is responsible for wildlife and geological conservation in special sites and in the wider countryside. It advises government, carries out research, and offers grants and advice. EN operates through 8 Regional offices and 24 local teams.
Joint Nature Conservation Committee Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JY Tel: 01733 562626 www.jncc.gov.uk	JNCC aims to coordinate the work of English Nature with that of the other two national conservation agencies, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales. It represents the UK on international agencies.
**English Heritage Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB Tel: 020 7973 3000 www.english-heritage.org.uk	EH is responsible for the conservation of ancient monuments, historic buildings, and historic parks/gardens. It offers advice on architectural and archaeological conservation and runs a number of grant schemes. It operates through 9 regional offices.
**Sport England (The Sports Council) 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H0QP Tel: 020 7273 1500 www.sportengland.org	The Sports Council can help with sources of advice on schemes to improve participation in sports and active recreation. It also administers the National Lottery's Sports Fund. It operates through 9 regional offices, delivering sport programmes, advice and funding at a local level.
**English Tourism Council ETC Thames Tower, Blacks Road, London W6 9EL Tel: 020 8563 3000 www.englishtourism.org.uk	ETC is the England arm of the British Tourist Authority and seeks to promote tourism through 10 Regional Tourist Boards. These are a source of valuable information and useful policy advice and may provide access to funding sources.
**Forestry Authority (England) Great Eastern House, Tenison Road, Cambridge, CB1 2DU Tel: 01223 314546 www.forestry.gov.uk	The Forestry Authority, as part of the Forestry Commission (FC), offers advice and financial assistance to landowners including the Woodland Grant Scheme which supports woodland planting and management. Regional officers may also be able to provide useful assistance on policy matters.
**Forest Enterprise 340 Bristol Business Park, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1AJ Tel: 0117 906 6000	Forest Enterprise is the FC's executive arm manages publicly owned forests and woodlands, through 11 English Districts. Forest Research is the FC's scientific research and surveys executive and provides advice on sustainable forest management through its research station at Alice Holt in Hampshire.
Forest Research National Statistics Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG Tel: 0845 601 3034 www.statistics.gov.uk	Incorporating the old Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, the Office for National Statistics provides a comprehensive range of UK official statistics, searchable on site.

1. Statutory agencies continued...

Millennium Commission 2, Little Smith Street, London SW1P, HD Tel: 020 7340 2030 www.millennium.gov.uk	The Millennium Commission administers the National Lottery Millennium Fund, which is available principally in support of capital projects.
The National Lottery Charities Board St Vincent House, 30, Orange Street, London WC2H 7HH Tel: 020 7747 5299 www.nlcb.org.uk	Offers lottery grants to charities and voluntary organisations.
Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 7 Holbein Place, London, SW1W 8NR Tel: 020 7591 6041/2/3 www.hlf.org.uk	Has a number of grant schemes to support projects involving the local, regional and national heritage.
National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) 20, King Street, London SW1Y 6QY Tel: 020 7930 0963 www.nhmf.org.uk/index2.html	The NHMF administers the National Lottery Heritage Fund and offers financial assistance as a 'safety net' towards the cost of acquiring land, buildings, or art works that are of outstanding interest and important to the national heritage.
Ordnance Survey (OS) Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, SOUTHAMPTON, SO16 4GU Tel: 08456 05 05 05 www.ordsvy.gov.uk	The OS is Britain's national mapping agency and supplies a wide range of maps, computer data and other geographical information. Its website has (amongst other things) an excellent guide to GIS and its applications.
British Geological Survey (BGS) Kingsley Dunham Centre, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5GG Tel: 0115 936 3100 www.bgs.ac.uk	The BGS is the government body mapping, monitoring, and data-basing earth heritage. It can also provide routes to advice on local matters to do with earth science.
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) Monks Wood, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon,, Cambs, PE28 2LS Tel: 01487 772400 www.ceh.ac.uk	CEH is the main centre for research, survey, and monitoring in terrestrial and freshwater environments. The Environmental Information Centre of CEH manages the Countryside Information System, CIS.
HMSO St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich, NR3 1BQ Tel: 01603 621000 www.hmso.gov.uk	HMSO is the government's publishing arm The full text of UK Acts of Parliament, Explanatory Notes, and Statutory Instruments can be found on-line at www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk

ii. Commercial organisations

Note that many government agencies now make charges for their services and many have commercial arms that operate, in effect, as private organisations.

The Stationery Office (SO) PO Box 29, St Crispins House, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN Tel: 0870 600 5522 www.thestationeryoffice.com	SO is the privatised arm of HMSO which carries out its trading functions including the supply of government documents. The catalogue is on- line.
INFOTERRA Delta House, Southwood Crescent, Southwood, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0NL Tel: 01455 849203 www.infoterra-global.com	Previously Geodata this company is one of the largest suppliers of remote sensing data.
Getmapping Virginia Villas, The High Street, Hartley Wintney, Hampshire RG27 8NW Tel: 01252 849424 www1.getmapping.com	Was established in November 1998 as the 'Millennium Mapping Company' specifically to produce and market the first full-colour, digital, aerial photographic map of the UK.

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations

** indicates that the agency has regional or local offices or groups branches which should often be the first port of call.

ACRE/Rural Action for the Environment ACRE Offices, Somerford Court Somerford Road, Cirencester, Gloucs, GL7 1TW Tel: 01285 653477 www.acre.org.uk	A partnership which encourages direct action by local groups in rural areas. It can help with grants for surveys, publicity, feasibility studies and skills training.
Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) The Old Police Station, Cotswold Heritage Centre, Northleach, Gloucestershire, GL54 3JH Tel: 01451 862007 www.aonb.org.uk	The partnership of AAONBs, working together to achieve greater benefits for these special areas. Its website is under development but will in due course provide a portal to those of other AONBs, as well as individual contact details and other information.
Architectural Heritage Fund 27 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6HX Tel: 020 7925 0199 www.ahfund.org.uk	Provides loans to local preservation trusts and other charities towards the repair and rehabilitation of historic buildings, and also grants towards feasibility studies on potential projects.
Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI) Cruachan, Tayinloan, Tarbert, PA29 6XF Tel: 01583 441114 www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk	Previously the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage (SIBH), the membership organisation for interpretation professionals. It runs the annual Interpret Britain awards.

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations continued...

<p>**British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) 36 St Mary's Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 0EU Tel: 01491 839766 www.btcv.org</p>	<p>Organises volunteer labour for conservation and environmental improvement tasks and provides environmental training courses. A useful contact for advice as well as for conservation labour (for which a fee is charged).</p>
<p>Civic Trust 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1 5AW Tel: 020 7930 0914 www.civictrust.org.uk</p>	<p>Promotes quality of life in Britain's cities, towns and villages, increasingly focusing on partnerships and civic action. activities include practical regeneration projects, championing Civic Societies, organising Heritage Open Days and the famous Civic Trust Awards, plus campaigning for a better urban environment.</p>
<p>**Common Ground Seven Dials Warehouse, 44 Earlham Street, London, WC2H 9LA Tel: 020 7379 3109 www.commonground.org.uk</p>	<p>Promotes environmental projects which emphasise local sense of place, such as Parish Maps, Local Distinctiveness, Save Our Orchards and New Milestones.</p>
<p>**Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) 25 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PP Tel: 020 7976 6433 www.cpre.org.uk</p>	<p>The CPRE's is influential in rural policy matters. Its head office is a useful source of information and advice. The many local groups include articulate and influential members of the local community and are an important contact point in AONB planning.</p>
<p>Country Land and Business Association (CLA) 16 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PQ Tel: 020 7235 0511 www.cla.org.uk</p>	<p>The CLA represents the interests of landowners and has a variety of membership services. Some influential AONB landowners are likely to be members.</p>
<p>Countryside Management Association (CMA) Writtle College, Lordship Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR Tel: 01245 424263 www.countrysideassociation.org.uk</p>	<p>CMA links the common interest of countryside managers at the site and landscape level - rangers and wardens. It has annual conferences and has a quarterly journal Ranger.</p>
<p>Countryside Management Partnership (CMS) The CMS Support, Penrhyncoch, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3EE Tel: 01970 820620 www.cmsp.co.uk</p>	<p>The CMS partnership includes the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, The National Trust, the RSPB, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, the Exmoor National Park Authority, the Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. It is the parent organisation for CMS (see Appendix 4, Information Technology in AONB Management) - a computerised project-based management planning and recording tool.</p>
<p>Countryside Recreation Network (CRN) Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WA Tel: 029 2087 4970 www.countrysidecreation.org.uk</p>	<p>CRN is funded by the CA and other agencies to spread information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.</p>

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations continued...

**Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Warwickshire, CV8 2RX Tel: 01203 696699 www.fwag.org.uk	Acts as the umbrella body for the county-based system of Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups. These provide advice through 9 regional offices, to farmers on farm conservation and whole-farm planning, including assistance with the preparation of management plans. FWAG advisers can help to deliver AONB objectives on individual farms.
Fieldfare Trust 67a, The Wicker, Sheffield, S3 8HT Tel: 0114 270 1668 www.fieldfare.org.uk	Promotes enjoyment and education in the countryside for all, especially those who by reason of disability or disadvantage are handicapped in pursuing opportunities. A good source of advice and expertise.
Game Conservancy Trust Burgate Manor, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 1EF Tel: 01425 652381 www.game-conservancy.org.uk	The Game Conservancy Trust carries out research into game birds and mammals, and offers practical advice to members and to the public. An important contact point where these are significant issues.
The Garden History Society; The Association of Garden Trusts 77 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6BP Tel: 020 7608 2409 www.gardenhistorysociety.org www.gardenstrusts.co.uk	Both these organisations promote the conservation of historic gardens. Can provide links to local expertise.
**Groundwork Foundation 85-87 Cornwall Street, Birmingham, B3 3BY Tel: 0121 236 8565 www.groundwork.org.uk	The umbrella body for the fifty or so Groundwork Trusts which run public and private sector projects to enhance the environment in the urban fringe. A good track record of achieving change for the benefit of local landscapes and people.
Landscape Institute 6-8 Barnard Mews, London SW11 1QU Tel: 020 7350 5200 www.l-i.org.uk Landscape Design Trust 13a, West Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9BL Tel: 01737 221116 www.landscape.co.uk	Landscape Institute is the Chartered Institute in the UK for Landscape Architects and the Landscape Design Trust is its independent practical arm.
Learning Through Landscapes Third Floor, Southside Offices, The Law Courts, Winchester, SO23 9DL Tel: 01962 846258 www.ltl.org.uk/	Seeks to stimulate changes in the land surrounding schools, and to encourage better use of existing resources for learning. A good source of ideas for links with local schools.

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations continued...

Local Government Association (LGA) Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ Tel: 020 7664 3000 www.lga.gov.uk	LGA offers support and advice to member authorities and councillors.
**National Farmers Union (NFU) 22, Long Acre, London, WC2E 9LY Tel: 020 7331 7293 www.nfu.org.uk	The NFU offers advice and legal help to its members. In general, it aims to promote the interests of farmers, and through its many local groups is an effective voice of and route for communication with the local farming community.
National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) 25, Ovington Square, London, SW3 1LQ Tel: 020 7584 6445 www.npfa.co.uk	The NPFA exists to promote public playing fields, playgrounds and play spaces.
**The National Trust (NT) 36, Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AS Tel: 020 7222 9251 www.nationaltrust.org.uk	The Trust owns and manages much countryside and coast, as well as historic buildings. Trust site staff are often prepared to advise and help adjacent land managers. Its large membership is organised nationally but also has links with the 13 English regions. NT holdings are likely to be a significant
**Ramblers Association 2nd floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW Tel: 020 7339 8500 www.ramblers.org.uk	element of the landscape in most AONBs. The Ramblers can provide site managers with a users' eye view of rights of way. The organisation aims to promote rambling, protect rights of way, campaign for access to open country and defend the beauty of the countryside. Local branches provide the link with users and activists.
**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL Tel: 01767 680551 www.rspb.org.uk	RSPB has a membership of some 1.5 million (and 350 adult and junior members' groups) and runs 150 nature reserves in the UK, There are 5 English regional offices and many local groups.
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) The Royal Town Planning Institute 41 Botolph Lane, London, EC3R 8DL Tel: 020 7929 9494 www.rtpi.org.uk	The professional body for planners, not completely to do with towns. Their weekly newsletter, Planning is an excellent review of planning action and policy, see also the website www.planning.haynet.com .
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 37, Spital Square, London, E1 6DY Tel: 020 7377 1644 www.spab.org.uk	SPAB promotes the conservation and repair of old buildings. It offers technical advice and training courses.

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations continued...

Sustrans 35 King Street, Bristol, BS1 4DJ Tel: 0117 926 8893 www.sustrans.org.uk	Sustrans is a practical charity that designs and builds routes for cycling and walking in partnership with local communities.
The Tree Council 51 Catherine Place, London, SW1E 6DY Tel: 020 7828 9928 www.treecouncil.org.uk	Provides advice and grant aid for tree planting and care in both urban and rural areas.
Town and Country Planning Association 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS Tel: 020 7930 8903 www.tcpa.org.uk	The membership body for practitioners (and organisations) campaigning for the reform of the UK's planning system to make it more responsive to people's needs and to promote sustainable development and social justice. An excellent source of ideas and analysis.
**Wildlife Trusts Partnership (RSNC) The Green, Withal Park, Waterside South, Lincoln, LN5 7JR Tel: 01522 544400 www.wildlifetrusts.org	The umbrella body for 46 county and urban wildlife trusts, with a total of more than 350,000 members and 2,400 nature reserves, these are important land managers in their own right, and, through their membership, important influences on local rural policy.
Woodland Trust Autumn Park, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6LL Tel: 01476 74297 www.woodland-trust.org.uk	Offers help and advice on woodland planting, and also operates a 'license planting scheme' for private landowners.

iii. International organisations (and their UK divisions)

These include both 'Governmental' (e.g. European Union bodies) and non-governmental bodies, though the latter may often have a quasi - official status (e.g. IUCN, WCMC). Many of these have UK based branches or divisions. Only the websites and (where they exist) the UK postal addresses are provided here.

ECOVAST c/o CCRU, Cheltenham and Gloucester College, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ Tel: 01242 544031 www.ecovast.org	European Council for the Village Small Town, exists to further the well-being of rural communities, and the safeguarding of the rural heritage, throughout Europe.
EUROPARC P.O. Box 1153, D-94475 Grafenau, Germany Tel: ++49 (85 52) 96 10-0 www.greenchannel.com/fnnpe	Formally known as the Federation of Nature of National Parks of Europe, (FNNPE), EUROPARC affiliates include more than two hundred nationally protected areas in over thirty countries. AONBs may wish to become members.

iii. Voluntary/not for profit organisations continued...

European Centre for Nature Conservation PO Box 1352, 5004, BJ Tilburg, the Netherlands Tel: ++31 13 466 32 40 www.ecnc.nl	Supported by national conservation agencies and the IUCN, ECNC focuses on the interface between biodiversity science and policy in a European context.
European Environment Agency Kongens Nyortov 6, 1050 Copenhagen, Denmark Tel: ++45 3336 7100 www.eea.eu.int	EEA provides targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy making agents and the public. European Topic Centres include land Cover (ETC/LC) and Nature Conservation (ETC/NC). It maintains an information service at http://service.eea.eu.int .
IUCN - The World Conservation Union Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Switzerland Tel: ++41-22-999-0001 www.iucn.org	the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources brings together 78 states, 112 government agencies 735 NGOs and 35 affiliates on policy matters including several key treaties for the UK.
World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) 219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL Tel: 01223 277314 www.unep-wcmc.org	WCMC provides information for policy and action to conserve biodiversity. Works closely with national agencies.
World Wide Fund for Nature www.panda.org www.wwf.org.uk www.wwf-uk.org	A membership organisation with national and local groups that funds the IUCN and conservation activities in groups own countries and worldwide.

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Checklist

This list of topics and actions may help to ensure that nothing has been overlooked in the preparation of an AONB Management Plan

Action. These actions are given in the rough order in which they will arise during the preparation or review of an AONB Management Plan	Section (references are to sections of this guide unless otherwise stated)	Typical time-scale
Preparation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the status and administrative structure of the AONB, responsible local authorities and key officers and the relationship with any local authority committees or conservation board to any wider representative managing structure Identify the timescale and resources available for the production or review of the AONB Management Plan and prepare a costed work programme Contact the Countryside Agency and English Nature and establish working links with appropriate regional officials Establish a representative Steering Group for the Plan and develop its work programme, including decisions about who does what List and prioritise the intended key functions of the Plan Identify and prioritise the target audiences for the Plan Identify key stakeholder organisations in the AONB and key individuals within them Let others know that a new Plan is being prepared 	<p>Appendix 1: Legislation and legal obligations (page 71)</p> <p>1.1.3 Management Plans and CRoW (page 14)</p> <p>1.1.4 The Countryside Agency (page 15)</p> <p>2.2 Getting started (page 31)</p> <p>1.2.3 Why plan? (page 18)</p> <p>1.2.4 Who is the Plan for? (page 19) and 3.1.1 Integration (page 43)</p> <p>2.3.1 Who should be involved? (Page 34)</p> <p>2.3.2 Participation methods (page 34)</p>	1 – 3 months
Participation and collecting information		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a participation strategy including methods appropriate to target groups, required outcomes and time and resources available Obtain key documents including existing development plans, the landscape assessment, and any other documents (e.g. an Issues Report) that may have been produced for the AONB Identify and locate other existing plans and policies that may be relevant to the area Identify other 'special' sites and landscapes within the AONB Analyse documentary inputs and results of participation using appropriate methods, for example the 'Quality of Life Capital' approach (page 22) Conduct a 'sustainability audit' of the Plan and its policies, planning and sustainability 	<p>2.3.2 Participation methods (page 34)</p> <p>1.3.2 Development Plans (page 25), community strategies and access to the countryside, and 1.3.3 Other AONB policies and documents (page 27)</p> <p>1.3 Relation of AONB Management Plans to other plans and policies (page 22)</p> <p>1.3.4 Special areas within the AONB (page 29)</p> <p>2.3.4 Analysis (page 39), and 1.3.1 AONB management planning and sustainability</p> <p>1.3.1 AONB management planning and sustainability (page 22)</p>	6 – 12 months

Action. These actions are given in the rough order in which they will arise during the preparation or review of an AONB Management Plan	Section (references are to sections of this guide unless otherwise stated)	Typical time-scale
Drafting and consultation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on a provisional structure for the plan and develop preliminary ideas for its format and presentation Identify what further work and/or sub-plans may be necessary to elaborate particular policy areas Devise and implement the production of the draft Plan Issue the draft Plan for consultation, and collect and record feedback on it Incorporate agreed amendments into a draft of the final Plan, and obtain endorsement from constituent local authorities and others 	<p>3. The product - contents of an AONB Management Plan (page 43)</p> <p>3.2 Elements within a Plan (page 45) and 1.3.3 Other AONB policies and documents (page 27)</p> <p>2.4 Drafting (page 40)</p> <p>2.5 Getting feedback on the draft Plan (page 41)</p>	6 – 12 months
Launch and implement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send a copy of the final Plan to the Countryside Agency and English Nature, to the Secretary of State for the Environment and to all relevant local authorities Publicise the fact that the Plan has been produced Ensure that copies of the plan have been brought to the attention of key individuals and stakeholder organisations, including public bodies and statutory undertakers Begin to implement at least some of the key policies in the Plan with appropriate publicity so that the momentum behind the consensus and for ongoing action is maintained Establish appropriate procedures for monitoring action and for ongoing review and update of the Action Plan Establish appropriate programmes for monitoring the the AONB using other condition of agencies where appropriate and integrating with other programmes Begin early discussions on arrangements for the Management Plan review 	<p>1.1.3 Management Plans and CRoW, (page 14) and 1.1.4 The Countryside Agency (page 15)</p> <p>2.6 Adoption, promotion and implementation (page 42)</p> <p>1.1.5 Relevant authorities (page 15)</p> <p>4.1 Implementing the Plan (page 60)</p> <p>4.2.1 Monitoring action (page 64), and 4.3 The Management Plan review (page 68)</p> <p>4.2.2 Monitoring condition (page 64)</p> <p>4.3 The Management Plan review (page 68)</p>	2 – 6 months



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